

GNVQs 1992 - 1995:
The Implementation of GNVQ Programmes
at Institutional Level

Volume 1

Thesis submitted for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the
University of Leicester

by
Ellie Johnson Searle

School of Education
University of Leicester

March 2001

GNVQs 1992 - 1995: The Implementation of GNVQ Programmes at Institutional Level

Abstract

High unemployment and, more recently, global competition have led many countries to review their education and training provision with the aim of encouraging more students to take a positive decision to remain in education or training in the post-compulsory phase thus increasing national levels of participation and attainment. Central to the response in England has been the creation of a new range of qualifications General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which are seen as making vocational education more attractive through their distinctive approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Government strategy has been to encourage the development of these qualifications aiming for parity of esteem with academic qualifications such as Advanced levels. GNVQs were seen as having the capacity to bridge the academic/vocational divide, to be equivalent to and an alternative national qualification to current academic and vocational qualifications and to provide an alternative progression route.

This research focuses on the implementation of GNVQs at the institutional level and argues that the rhetoric contrasts sharply with reality. It draws on evidence from case studies as well as a national sample of colleges and schools. It shows that there were considerable variations in the reasons why GNVQs were introduced and how they were developed and offered. Key areas that have prevented the effective implementation of the qualifications are identified including the type of institution, their previous experience of vocational education, the particular awarding body, their experience of GNVQs and the vocational areas offered.

GNVQs were perceived by their developers as being 'liberating' for institutions and their staff. Whilst they have been positively received by some their complex and bureaucratic structures, and implementation of their elaborate assessment requirements are shown to present centres with considerable difficulty in meeting the requirements of 'good practice' identified by Government agencies.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people who have helped me to carry out this study.

I am grateful to many colleagues and students (too numerous to list), who over the years, have contributed to my understanding of vocational education and training.

I would like to thank the staff in the centres who participated in the study, including those who participated in the preliminary and pilot research. Without the co-operation of all of these people the study and thesis would not have been possible.

Many thanks to Peter for his endless encouragement and support. Also my Mum whose main role has been to check up on my progress.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my supervisors, Tom Whiteside and Alan Sutton for their help, advice and guidance. They have encouraged me to look beyond the traditional confines of vocational education and training. Without their co-operation and constant support, this thesis would not have been completed.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

		Page
	The Development of Vocational Education and Training Prior to General National Vocational Qualifications	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	The move to mass participation and attainment	2
1.3	The new genre of pre-employment courses	9
1.4	The reform of vocational qualifications in response to perceived weaknesses	14
1.5	The situation prior to the introduction of GNVQs	17
1.6	Alternative solutions to the issues	21

Chapter Two

The Development of GNVQs

2.1	Introduction	22
2.2	The emergence of GNVQs (1991 - 95)	22
	The White Paper	22
2.3	Distinctive features of GNVQs	24
	Centre Approval	26
	Target audience	26
	Entry requirements	27
	Induction	28
	Key Skills	29
	Grading criteria	32
	Assessment	34
	Developing the potential to combine GNVQs with other qualifications	38
	Progression routes and levels	40
	Complexity	42
	Teaching methods	43
	Links with the world of work	45
2.4	The introduction of GNVQs	45
	The education climate	45
	The pilot phase	46

	National availability	52
2.5	Conclusions	57
2.6	Background to the research	59

Chapter Three

Research methodology

3.1	Introduction	62
3.2	The research process	64
	The preliminary research	64
	Designing the pilot questionnaire	67
	The pilot research	71
	The main research	72
3.3	Analysis of the data	76
	Selecting the vocational area for the response	77
3.4	Conclusions	79

Chapter Four

General National Vocational Qualifications - A Profile of Provision

4.1	Introduction	81
4.2	Type of institutions offering GNVQs	81
4.3	Vocational areas offered	82
4.4	Levels offered	84
4.5	Course entry	85
	Different entry requirements	86
	Specific entry requirements	86
	Entry to Foundation programmes	87
	Entry to Intermediate programmes	88
	Entry to Advanced programmes	89
4.6	Reasons for introducing GNVQs	90
	Improving provision and meeting student needs	91
	Natural progression to previous courses	92
	Demise of BTEC or other courses	92
	Management decision	93

	Competition	93
	Create or improve work/industry links	93
	Additional comments from centres	94
4.7	Awarding body approval	94
4.8	GNVQ experience	95
4.9	Previous experience of other vocational courses	96
4.10	How GNVQs were offered	97
4.11	Profiles for different types of centre	99
4.12	The influence of awarding body approval	110
4.13	The influence of GNVQ and previous vocational experience	112
4.14	The influence of the vocational areas and levels offered	114
4.15	Summary of profiles	117

Chapter Five

The Management of the Introduction of GNVQs

5.1	Introduction	120
5.2	GNVQ roles and responsibilities	121
	General management responsibilities in GNVQ centres	122
5.3	Lead-in time and preparation prior to recruiting the first students	123
5.4	Staff induction	123
	The basic structure and management of staff inductions	124
5.5	The management of the introduction of GNVQs in different types of centre	127
5.6	The influence of awarding body approval	131
5.7	The influence of GNVQ and previous vocational experience	132
5.8	The influence of vocational areas offered	133
5.9	The influence of lead-in time	134

5.10	Summary of the management of the introduction	134
------	---	-----

Chapter Six

The GNVQ Curriculum

6.1	Introduction	138
6.2	Student induction	138
	How inductions were offered	139
	Student admission pattern	140
	The timing of induction	140
	How inductions were managed	141
	The length of induction	141
	Activities included in the student induction	142
6.3	Variations in induction	151
	Inductions in different types of centre	151
	The influence of awarding body approval on student inductions	153
	The influence of GNVQ experience on student inductions	156
	The influence of previous vocational experience on student inductions	157
	Induction for Major and Minor league GNVQs	158
	Lead-in time and student induction	159
	The influence of the length of induction	160
6.4	Summary of induction	161
6.5	The delivery of GNVQ programmes	164
6.6	Variations in delivery	171
	Programmes offered in different types of centre	171
	The influence of awarding body approval on delivery	174
	The influence of GNVQ experience on delivery	176
	The influence of previous vocational experience on delivery	178
	Delivery for Major and Minor league GNVQs	178
	The influence of lead-in time on delivery	180
6.7	Summary of delivery	181
6.8	The exit phase of GNVQ programmes	184
	Advice and guidance on careers	185
	Advice and guidance on GNVQ	186
	Completion of the programmes	186
	Progression routes	187
6.9	Variations in the exit phase	190
	The exit phase in different types of centre	190

	The influence of awarding body approval on the exit phase	191
	The influence of GNVQ experience on the exit phase	192
	The influence of previous vocational experience on the exit phase	193
	The exit phase for Major and Minor league GNVQs	193
	The influence of lead-in time on the exit phase	195
6.10	Summary of the exit phase	195

Chapter Seven

The Assessment of GNVQs

7.1	Introduction	198
7.2	Assessment practice	199
7.3	Assessment in different types of centre	201
7.4	The influence of awarding body approval on assessment	202
7.5	The influence of GNVQ experience on assessment	202
7.6	The influence of previous vocational experience on assessment	203
7.7	Assessment for Major and Minor league GNVQs	203
7.8	The influence of lead-in time on assessment	204
7.9	Summary of assessment	204

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.1	Introduction	206
8.2	Achieving the aims of GNVQ	206
8.3	Distinctive features of GNVQ	211
8.4	The Quality Framework	217
8.5	Differences and similarities in provision	222
	Types of centre	222

Awarding body approval	225
GNVQ and previous vocational experience	227
Lead-in time	229
Major and Minor league GNVQs	229
General comments	231

Chapter Nine

GNVQs 1996 - 2000

9.1	Introduction	233
9.2	Ongoing issues	233
	Numbers achieving GNVQs	235
9.3	Influences on changes to GNVQs	236
9.4	The New Model GNVQ	239
	Key skills	242
9.5	Conclusions	244

Bibliography	248
---------------------	-----

Appendices	263
-------------------	-----

List of Tables

Table		Page
3.1	The decision making process	63
3.2	Overview of the research process	64
3.3	Comparison of GNVQ research projects	75
3.4	Response by geographical area	77
3.5	Selection of a vocational area by the respondents	78
3.6	Reasons for selecting the vocational area	78
3.7	Summary of multiple reasons for selecting the vocational area	79
4.1	Institutions that offered GNVQs	81
4.2	How GNVQs were offered in Schools 14 - 19	82
4.3	Popularity of GNVQs offered in centres	83
4.4	Major and Minor league GNVQs	83
4.5	Levels offered	84
4.6	The use of consistent entry requirements	86
4.7	The use of unspecified GCSE requirements	87
4.8	Foundation level entry requirements	88
4.9	Intermediate level entry requirements	89
4.10	Advanced level entry requirements	90
4.11	Reasons for introducing GNVQs	91
4.12	Awarding body approval	95
4.13	GNVQ experience and approval status	96
4.14	Previous vocational experience of centres	97
4.15	Full and Part-time provision in centres	98
4.16	Academic courses offered alongside GNVQs	98

4.17	Vocational courses offered alongside GNVQs	99
4.18	Overview of courses offered alongside GNVQs	99
4.19	Vocational areas offered in different centres	100
4.20	Levels offered in different centres	101
4.21	Intermediate entry requirements in centres with no Foundation level	104
4.22	Intermediate entry requirements in centres offering Foundation level	104
4.23	Advanced level entry requirements in different centres	105
4.24	Awarding body approval in different centres	106
4.25	Previous vocational experience in different centres	107
4.26	Foundation level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres	108
4.27	Intermediate level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres	109
4.28	Advanced level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres	109
4.29	Previous experience of centres offering Business	112
4.30	Previous vocational experience and reasons for introducing GNVQs	114
4.31	Popularity of different levels offered	115
4.32	Comparisons of variations in entry requirements for Art and Design and Business	116
4.33	Reasons for introducing Minor league GNVQs	117
5.1	GNVQ status and roles of the respondents	121
5.2	Non-GNVQ status of the respondents	122
5.3	Lead-in time prior to the introduction of GNVQs	123
5.4	The formality of staff induction	124
5.5	The use of materials in staff induction	125
5.6	Approaches to staff induction	125

5.7	Group and individual approaches in staff induction	126
5.8	The timing of staff induction	126
5.9	The length of staff induction	127
5.10	Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model One	128
5.11	Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model Two	128
5.12	Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model Three	129
6.1	Description of student inductions	139
6.2	Admission pattern for students	140
6.3	Timing of student induction	140
6.4	The management of student induction	141
6.5	Length of student induction	142
6.6	GNVQ specific activities included in the student induction	144
6.7	Ease of introducing GNVQ specific activities in the student induction	145
6.8	Assessment activities included in the student induction	146
6.9	Ease of introducing assessment activities in the student induction	146
6.10	Advice and guidance included in the student induction	147
6.11	Ease of introducing advice and guidance included in the student induction	148
6.12	Selection processes included in the student induction	149
6.13	Ease of introducing selection processes included in the student induction	149
6.14	Familiarization processes included in the student induction	150
6.15	Ease of introducing familiarization processes included in the student induction	150
6.16	Management of the delivery of programmes	165
6.17	Integration of delivery	166

6.18	Influences on the optional units	167
6.19	Pre-selection of optional units	167
6.20	GNVQ specific approaches in the programmes	169
6.21	Planning, advice and negotiation	170
6.22	Other aspects of programme content	170
6.23	Resources for delivery	171
6.24	Careers advice and guidance	185
6.25	GNVQ advice and guidance	186
6.26	Completing the programme	187
6.27	Progression routes (external)	189
6.28	Progression routes (courses)	189
7.1	Timing and writing of assignments	199
7.2	The use of integration in assignments	200
7.3	Feedback on assignments and resubmissions	201
9.1	Numbers of students achieving GNVQs 1996 - 1999	235
9.2	Ongoing changes to GNVQs 1996 - 2000	240

List of Appendices

Appendix			Page
1	1.1	International solutions	264
2	2.1	Comparison of GNVQs, TVEI and NVQs	269
	2.2	Comparison of level three qualifications	270
	2.3	The phased introduction of GNVQs	271
	2.4	Organizations involved in the development and monitoring of GNVQs	272
3	3.1	Preliminary research - Centre profiles	274
	3.2	Preliminary research - Training provider profiles	277
	3.3	Analysis of the questionnaire in relation to the Quality Framework	284
	3.4	The questionnaire	322
	3.5	Letter to the centres	335
	3.6	Follow-up letter	336
4	4.1	Popularity of Foundation level programmes offered in different centres	337
	4.2	Popularity of Intermediate level programmes offered in different centres	337
	4.3	Popularity of Advanced level programmes offered in different centres	338
	4.4	How Art and Design was offered in different centres	338
	4.5	How Leisure and Tourism was offered in different centres	339
	4.6	How Business was offered in different centres	339
	4.7	How Health and Social Care was offered in different centres	340
	4.8	How Information Technology was offered in different centres	340

4.9	How Science was offered in different centres	341
4.10	How Manufacturing was offered in different centres	341
4.11	How Engineering was offered in different centres	342
4.12	The use of consistent entry requirements in different centres	342
4.13	Foundation level entry requirements in different centres	343
4.14	Intermediate level entry requirements in different centres	343
4.15	Reasons for introducing GNVQs given by different centres	344
4.16	GNVQ approval experience in different centres	344
4.17	Full-time academic courses offered with GNVQs in different centres	344
4.18	Full-time vocational courses offered with GNVQs in different centres	345
4.19	Courses offered with Foundation level in different centres	345
4.20	Courses offered with Intermediate level in different centres	346
4.21	Courses offered with Advanced level in different centres	346
4.22	Popularity of vocational areas offered by centres with different awarding body approval	347
4.23	The use of consistent entry requirements by centres with different awarding body approval	347
4.24	Foundation level entry requirements and different awarding body approval	348
4.25	Intermediate level entry requirements and different awarding body approval	348
4.26	Advanced level entry requirements and different awarding body approval	349

	4.27	Reasons for introduction and different awarding body approval	349
	4.28	GNVQ experience and different awarding body approval	350
	4.29	Previous vocational experience and different awarding body approval	350
	4.30	Previous vocational experience and different centres	350
	4.31	Previous vocational experience of centres offering Manufacturing	351
	4.32	Previous vocational experience of centres offering Health and Social Care	351
	4.33	Previous vocational experience of centres offering Leisure and Tourism	352
	4.34	Previous vocational experience of centres offering Art and Design	352
	4.35	Previous vocational experience of centres offering Science	353
	4.36	Previous vocational experience and Foundation level entry requirements	353
	4.37	Previous vocational experience and Intermediate level entry requirements	354
	4.38	Previous vocational experience and Advanced level entry requirements	354
	4.39	Reasons for introducing GNVQs and centre approval experience	355
	4.40	Entry requirements for Foundation level and centre approval experience	355
	4.41	Entry requirements for Intermediate level and centre approval experience	356
	4.42	Entry requirements for Advanced level and centre approval experience	356
	4.43	Reasons for introducing Major league GNVQs	357
5	5.1	Lead-in time in different centres	358
	5.2	How GNVQ roles were used in different centres	358

5.3	The formality of induction in different centres	359
5.4	Approaches to induction in different centres	359
5.5	Group and individual approaches in induction in different centres	359
5.6	The timing of induction in different centres	359
5.7	The use of materials in different centres	360
5.8	The length of induction in different centres	360
5.9	Lead-in time and different awarding body approval	360
5.10	The formality of induction and different awarding body approval	360
5.11	The use of materials and different awarding body approval	361
5.12	The length of induction and different awarding body approval	361
5.13	Group and individual approaches to induction and different awarding body approval	361
5.14	The timing of induction and different awarding body approval	361
5.15	Approaches to induction and different awarding body approval	362
5.16	The formality of induction and previous vocational experience	362
5.17	The use of materials and previous vocational experience	362
5.18	Group and individual approaches and previous vocational experience	362
5.19	The length of induction and previous vocational experience	363
5.20	The timing of induction and previous vocational experience	363
5.21	Lead-in time and centre approval experience	363
5.22	Approaches to induction and centre approval experience	364

5.23	Group and individual approaches and centre approval experience	364
5.24	The formality of induction and centre approval experience	364
5.25	The timing of induction and centre approval experience	365
5.26	The use of materials and centre approval experience	365
5.27	The length of induction and centre approval experience	365
5.28	Lead-in time for Major league GNVQs	366
5.29	Lead-in time for Minor league GNVQs	366
5.30	Approaches to induction and Major league GNVQs	366
5.31	Approaches to induction and Minor league GNVQs	366
5.32	The timing of induction and Major league GNVQs	367
5.33	The timing of induction and Minor league GNVQs	367
5.34	Group and individual approaches to induction and Minor league GNVQs	367
5.35	Group and individual approaches to induction and Major league GNVQs	367
5.36	The length of induction and Minor league GNVQs	368
5.37	The length of induction and Major league GNVQs	368
5.38	The use of materials and Minor league GNVQs	368
5.39	The use of materials and Major league GNVQs	368
5.40	The formality of induction and Minor league GNVQs	369
5.41	The formality of induction and Major league GNVQs	369

	5.42	Lead-in time and the use of consistent entry requirements	369
	5.43	The formality of induction and lead-in time	369
	5.44	Approaches to induction and lead-in time	370
	5.45	The length of induction and lead-in time	370
	5.46	Group and individual approaches and lead-in time	370
	5.47	The use of materials and lead-in time	370
	5.48	The timing of induction and lead-in time	371
6	6.1	Inductions offered in different centres	372
	6.2	Admission in different centres	372
	6.3	Timing of induction in different centres	372
	6.4	Management of induction in different centres - the basis for induction	373
	6.5	Management of induction in different centres - the structure	373
	6.6	Length of induction in different centres	373
	6.7	Introducing action planning in different centres	373
	6.8	Introducing key skills in different centres	374
	6.9	Introducing grading in different centres	374
	6.10	Introducing study skills in different centres	374
	6.11	Introducing trips and visits in different centres	375
	6.12	Introducing terms and language in different centres	375
	6.13	Introducing taster activities in different centres	375
	6.14	Ease of introducing action planning in different centres	376
	6.15	Ease of introducing terms and language in different centres	376
	6.16	Ease of introducing key skills in different centres	376

6.17	Ease of introducing grading in different centres	376
6.18	Ease of introducing study skills in different centres	377
6.19	Ease of introducing taster activities in different centres	377
6.20	Ease of introducing trips and visits in different centres	377
6.21	Introducing assignments for the portfolio in different centres	378
6.22	Introducing practice assignments in different centres	378
6.23	Introducing APL in different centres	378
6.24	Introducing diagnostic assessment in different centres	379
6.25	Ease of introducing assignments for the portfolio in different centres	379
6.26	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment in different centres	379
6.27	Ease of introducing APL in different centres	380
6.28	Advice and guidance on programmes and routes in different centres	380
6.29	Initial advice in different centres	380
6.30	Introducing all of the courses in different centres	381
6.31	Ease of introducing advice and guidance on programmes and routes in different centres	381
6.32	Ease of introducing initial advice in different centres	381
6.33	Ease of introducing all of the courses in different centres	382
6.34	Course selection in different centres	382
6.35	Introducing the initial interviews in different centres	382
6.36	Selecting the vocational area in different centres	383

6.37	Selecting the level of GNVQ in different centres	383
6.38	Selecting additional courses in different centres	383
6.39	Selecting optional units in different centres	384
6.40	Ease of introducing course selection in different centres	384
6.41	Ease of introducing initial interviews in different centres	384
6.42	Ease of introducing the selection the vocational area in different centres	385
6.43	Ease of introducing the selection the level of GNVQ in different centres	385
6.44	Ease of introducing the selection of additional courses in different centres	385
6.45	Ease of introducing the selection of optional units in different centres	386
6.46	Inductions offered and different awarding body approval	386
6.47	Timing of induction and different awarding body approval	386
6.48	Formality of induction and different awarding body approval	387
6.49	Management of induction and different awarding body approval	387
6.50	Group and individual approaches and different awarding body approval	387
6.51	Length of induction and different awarding body approval	387
6.52	Introducing action planning and different awarding body approval	388
6.53	Introducing terms and language and different awarding body approval	388
6.54	Introducing key skills and different awarding body approval	388
6.55	Introducing grading and different awarding body approval	389

6.56	Introducing study skills and different awarding body approval	389
6.57	Introducing taster activities and different awarding body approval	389
6.58	Ease of introducing action planning and different awarding body approval	390
6.59	Ease of introducing terms and language and different awarding body approval	390
6.60	Ease of introducing key skills and different awarding body approval	390
6.61	Ease of introducing grading and different awarding body approval	390
6.62	Ease of introducing study skills and different awarding body approval	391
6.63	Ease of introducing taster activities and different awarding body approval	391
6.64	Introducing trips and visits and different awarding body approval	391
6.65	Ease of introducing trips and visits and different awarding body approval	392
6.66	Introducing practice assignments and different awarding body approval	392
6.67	Introducing APL and different awarding body approval	392
6.68	Introducing diagnostic assessment and different awarding body approval	393
6.69	Introducing assignments for the portfolio and different awarding body approval	393
6.70	Ease of introducing assignments for the portfolio and different awarding body approval	393
6.71	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and different awarding body approval	394
6.72	Ease of introducing practice assignments and different awarding body approval	394
6.73	Ease of introducing APL and different awarding body approval	394

6.74	Initial advice and different awarding body approval	395
6.75	Introducing all of the courses and different awarding body approval	395
6.76	Ease of introducing initial advice and different awarding body approval	395
6.77	Advice and guidance on programmes and routes and different awarding body approval	396
6.78	Selecting the level of GNVQ and different awarding body approval	396
6.79	Selecting additional courses and different awarding body approval	396
6.80	Selecting optional units and different awarding body approval	397
6.81	Ease of introducing the selection of additional courses and different awarding body approval	397
6.82	Ease of introducing the selection of optional units and different awarding body approval	397
6.83	Ease of introducing course selection and different awarding body approval	398
6.84	Ease of introducing the selection of the vocational area and different awarding body approval	398
6.85	Ease of introducing the selection of the level of GNVQ and different awarding body approval	398
6.86	Course selection and different awarding body approval	399
6.87	Selecting the vocational area and different awarding body approval	399
6.88	Inductions offered and centre approval experience	399
6.89	Timing of induction and centre approval experience	400
6.90	Management of induction and centre approval experience	400

6.91	Group and individual approaches and centre approval experience	400
6.92	Length of induction and centre approval experience	401
6.93	Introducing action planning and centre approval experience	401
6.94	Introducing terms and language and centre approval experience	401
6.95	Introducing key skills and centre approval experience	402
6.96	Introducing grading and centre approval experience	402
6.97	Introducing study skills and centre approval experience	402
6.98	Introducing taster activities and centre approval experience	403
6.99	Ease of introducing action planning and centre approval experience	403
6.100	Ease of introducing terms and language and centre approval experience	403
6.101	Ease of introducing key skills and centre approval experience	404
6.102	Ease of introducing grading and centre approval experience	404
6.103	Ease of introducing study skills and centre approval experience	404
6.104	Ease of introducing taster activities and centre approval experience	405
6.105	Introducing assignments for the portfolio and centre approval experience	405
6.106	Introducing practice assignments and centre approval experience	405
6.107	Introducing APL and centre approval experience	406
6.108	Introducing diagnostic assessment and centre approval experience	406

6.109	Ease of introducing assignments for the portfolio and centre approval experience	406
6.110	Ease of introducing practice assignments and centre approval experience	407
6.111	Ease of introducing APL and centre approval experience	407
6.112	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and centre approval experience	407
6.113	Course selection and centre approval experience	408
6.114	Selecting the vocational area and centre approval experience	408
6.115	Selecting the level of GNVQ and centre approval experience	408
6.116	Selecting additional courses and centre approval experience	409
6.117	Selecting optional units and centre approval experience	409
6.118	Introducing the initial interviews and centre approval experience	409
6.119	Ease of introducing course selection and centre approval experience	410
6.120	Ease of introducing the selection of the vocational area and centre approval experience	410
6.121	Ease of introducing the selection of the level of GNVQ and centre approval experience	410
6.122	Ease of introducing the selection of additional courses and centre approval experience	411
6.123	Ease of introducing the selection of optional units and centre approval experience	411
6.124	Ease of introducing the initial interviews and centre approval experience	411
6.125	Inductions and previous vocational experience	412
6.126	Group and individual approaches and previous vocational experience	412

6.127	Length of induction and previous vocational experience	412
6.128	Introducing terms and language and previous vocational experience	413
6.129	Introducing key skills and previous vocational experience	413
6.130	Introducing taster activities and previous vocational experience	413
6.131	Introducing trips and visits and previous vocational experience	414
6.132	Ease of introducing key skills and previous vocational experience	414
6.133	Ease of introducing taster activities and previous vocational experience	414
6.134	Ease of introducing trips and visits and previous vocational experience	415
6.135	Introducing assignments for the portfolio and previous vocational experience	415
6.136	Introducing practice assignments and previous vocational experience	415
6.137	Introducing diagnostic assessment and previous vocational experience	416
6.138	Ease of introducing assignments for the portfolio and previous vocational experience	416
6.139	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and previous vocational experience	416
6.140	Introducing APL and previous vocational experience	417
6.141	Ease of introducing APL and previous vocational experience	417
6.142	Ease of introducing practice assignments and previous vocational experience	417
6.143	Advice and guidance on programmes and routes and previous vocational experience	418

6.144	Ease of introducing advice and guidance on programmes and routes and previous vocational experience	418
6.145	Inductions and Major league GNVQs	418
6.146	Inductions and Minor league GNVQs	419
6.147	Admission and Major league GNVQs	419
6.148	Admission and Minor league GNVQs	419
6.149	Timing of induction and Major league GNVQs	419
6.150	Timing of induction and Minor league GNVQs	420
6.151	Management of induction and Major league GNVQs	420
6.152	Length of induction and Major league GNVQs	420
6.153	Length of induction and Minor league GNVQs	421
6.154	Introducing diagnostic assessment and Major league GNVQs	421
6.155	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and Major league GNVQs	421
6.156	Introducing diagnostic assessment and Minor league GNVQs	422
6.157	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and Minor league GNVQs	422
6.158	Course selection and Major league GNVQs	422
6.159	Introducing the initial interviews and Major league GNVQs	423
6.160	Selecting the level of GNVQ and Major league GNVQs	423
6.161	Selecting the optional units and Major league GNVQs	423
6.162	Introducing the initial interviews and Minor league GNVQs	424
6.163	Selecting the optional units and Minor league GNVQs	424
6.164	Inductions and lead-in time	424

6.165	Admission and lead-in time	425
6.166	Timing of induction and lead-in time	425
6.167	Group and individual approaches and lead-in time	425
6.168	Length of induction and lead-in time	425
6.169	Introducing action planning and lead-in time	426
6.170	Introducing key skills and lead-in time	426
6.171	Introducing grading and lead-in time	426
6.172	Introducing study skills and lead-in time	427
6.173	Ease of introducing study skills and lead-in time	427
6.174	Ease of introducing trips and visits and lead-in time	427
6.175	Ease of introducing action planning and lead-in time	428
6.176	Ease of introducing grading and lead-in time	428
6.177	Introducing assignments for the portfolio and lead-in time	428
6.178	Introducing practice assignments and lead-in time	429
6.179	Introducing APL and lead-in time	429
6.180	Introducing diagnostic assessment and lead-in time	429
6.181	Ease of introducing assignments for the portfolio and lead-in time	430
6.182	Ease of introducing practice assignments and lead-in time	430
6.183	Ease of introducing APL and lead-in time	430
6.184	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and lead-in time	431
6.185	Course selection and lead-in time	431
6.186	Introducing the initial interviews and lead-in time	431

6.187	Selecting the vocational area and lead-in time	432
6.188	Selecting the level of GNVQ and lead-in time	432
6.189	Selecting additional courses and lead-in time	432
6.190	Selecting optional units and lead-in time	433
6.191	Ease of introducing course selection and lead-in time	433
6.192	Ease of introducing the initial interviews and lead-in time	433
6.193	Ease of introducing the selection of the vocational area and lead-in time	434
6.194	Ease of introducing the selection of the level of GNVQ and lead-in time	434
6.195	Ease of introducing the selection of additional courses and lead-in time	434
6.196	Ease of introducing the selection of optional units and lead-in time	435
6.197	Inductions and length of induction	435
6.198	Formality of induction and length of induction	435
6.199	Management of induction and length of induction	436
6.200	Group and individual approaches and length of induction	436
6.201	Introducing terms and language and length of induction	436
6.202	Introducing key skills and length of induction	437
6.203	Introducing grading and length of induction	437
6.204	Ease of introducing terms and language and length of induction	437
6.205	Ease of introducing key skills and length of induction	438
6.206	Ease of introducing grading and length of induction	438

6.207	Ease of introducing study skills and length of induction	438
6.208	Introducing practice assignments and length of induction	439
6.209	Introducing APL and length of induction	439
6.210	Introducing diagnostic assessment and length of induction	439
6.211	Ease of introducing APL and length of induction	440
6.212	Ease of introducing diagnostic assessment and length of induction	440
6.213	Initial advice and length of induction	440
6.214	Ease of introducing initial advice and length of induction	441
6.215	Ease of introducing all of the courses and length of induction	441
6.216	Introducing the initial interviews and length of induction	441
6.217	Selecting the vocational area and length of induction	442
6.218	Selecting the level of GNVQ and length of induction	442
6.219	Selecting the optional units and length of induction	442
6.220	Ease of introducing the initial interviews and length of induction	443
6.221	Ease of introducing the selection of the level of GNVQ and length of induction	443
6.222	Ease of introducing the selection of the optional units and length of induction	443
6.223	Order of course delivery in different centres	444
6.224	Unit delivery linked to test dates in different centres	444
6.225	Learning tailored to individual needs in different centres	444

6.226	Integration of delivery of vocational and key skill units in different centres	445
6.227	Integration of delivery across mandatory units in different centres	445
6.228	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units in different centres	445
6.229	Influences on the optional units offered in different centres	446
6.230	Preselection of optional units in different centres	446
6.231	Action planning to complete assignments in different centres	446
6.232	Active learning in different centres	447
6.233	Unit test resit opportunities in different centres	447
6.234	Advice and guidance on GNVQ in different centres	447
6.235	Real world research in different centres	448
6.236	Separate grading criteria input in different centres	448
6.237	Separate CAR and portfolio input in different centres	448
6.238	Advising students of unit certification in different centres	449
6.239	Accreditation of prior learning in different centres	449
6.240	Fast track completion in different centres	449
6.241	Diagnostic assessment in different centres	450
6.242	Additional units in different centres	450
6.243	Formal lecture input in different centres	450
6.244	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes in different centres	451
6.245	Negotiating optional units in different centres	451

6.246	Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements in different centres	451
6.247	Action planning to plan learning in different centres	452
6.248	Study skills in different centres	452
6.249	Specific learner support in different centres	452
6.250	Student movements between levels in the same vocational area in different centres	453
6.251	Student movements between vocational areas in different centres	453
6.252	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors in different centres	453
6.253	Visits to industry by students in different centres	454
6.254	Visiting speakers in different centres	454
6.255	Links with other GNVQ centres in different centres	454
6.256	A range of resources that were easily accessible to students in different centres	455
6.257	Use of the library in different centres	455
6.258	Visits to/from FE/HE in different centres	455
6.259	Industry information packs in different centres	456
6.260	Work experience in different centres	456
6.261	Order of course delivery and different awarding body approval	456
6.262	Unit delivery linked to test dates and different awarding body approval	457
6.263	Learning tailored to individual needs and different awarding body approval	457
6.264	Integration of delivery across mandatory units and different awarding body approval	457
6.265	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units and different awarding body approval	458

6.266	Integration of delivery of vocational and key skill units and different awarding body approval	458
6.267	Preselection of optional units and different awarding body approval	458
6.268	Influences on optional units and different awarding body approval	459
6.269	Unit test resit opportunities and different awarding body approval	459
6.270	Separate grading criteria input and different awarding body approval	459
6.271	Diagnostic assessment and different awarding body approval	460
6.272	Accreditation of prior learning and different awarding body approval	460
6.273	Separate CAR and portfolio input and different awarding body approval	460
6.274	Additional units and different awarding body approval	461
6.275	Fast track completion option and different awarding body approval	461
6.276	Real world research and different awarding body approval	461
6.277	Advising students of unit certification and different awarding body approval	462
6.278	Action planning to complete assignments and different awarding body approval	462
6.279	Active learning and different awarding body approval	462
6.280	Action planning to plan learning and different awarding body approval	463
6.281	Formal lecture input and different awarding body approval	463
6.282	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and different awarding body approval	463
6.283	Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements and different awarding body approval	464

6.284	Negotiating optional units and different awarding body approval	464
6.285	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and different awarding body approval	464
6.286	Study skills and different awarding body approval	465
6.287	Student movements between vocational areas and different awarding body approval	465
6.288	Specific learner support and different awarding body approval	465
6.289	Student movements between levels in the same vocational area and different awarding body approval	466
6.290	A range of resources that were easily accessible to students and different awarding body approval	466
6.291	Use of the library and different awarding body approval	466
6.292	Visiting speakers and different awarding body approval	467
6.293	Industry information packs and different awarding body approval	467
6.294	Visits to/from FE/HE and different awarding body approval	467
6.295	Visits to industry by students and different awarding body approval	468
6.296	Work experience and different awarding body approval	468
6.297	Links with other GNVQ centres and different awarding body approval	468
6.298	Order of course delivery and centre approval experience	469
6.299	Unit delivery linked to test dates and centre approval experience	469
6.300	Learning tailored to individual needs and centre approval experience	469

6.301	Integration of delivery across mandatory units and centre approval experience	470
6.302	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units and centre approval experience	470
6.303	Preselection of optional units and centre approval experience	470
6.304	Influences on optional units and centre approval experience	471
6.305	Active learning and centre approval experience	471
6.306	Advice and guidance on GNVQ and centre approval experience	471
6.307	Separate grading criteria input and centre approval experience	472
6.308	Separate CAR and portfolio input and centre approval experience	472
6.309	Additional units and centre approval experience	472
6.310	Advising students of unit certification and centre approval experience	473
6.311	Action planning to plan learning and centre approval experience	473
6.312	Formal lecture input and centre approval experience	473
6.313	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and centre approval experience	474
6.314	Negotiating optional units and centre approval experience	474
6.315	Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements and centre approval experience	474
6.316	Study skills and centre approval experience	475
6.317	Specific learner support and centre approval experience	475
6.318	Student movements between levels in the same vocational area and centre approval experience	475
6.319	Student movements between vocational areas and centre approval experience	476

6.320	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and centre approval experience	476
6.321	A range of resources that were easily accessible to students and centre approval experience	476
6.322	Use of the library and centre approval experience	477
6.323	Visits to industry by students and centre approval experience	477
6.324	Visits to/from FE/HE and centre approval experience	477
6.325	Visiting speakers and centre approval experience	478
6.326	Links with other GNVQ centres and centre approval experience	478
6.327	Influences on the optional units and previous vocational experience	478
6.328	Active learning and previous vocational experience	479
6.329	Advice and guidance on GNVQ and previous vocational experience	479
6.330	Advising students of unit certification and previous vocational experience	479
6.331	Additional units and previous vocational experience	480
6.332	Action planning to plan learning and previous vocational experience	480
6.333	Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements and previous vocational experience	480
6.334	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and previous vocational experience	481
6.335	Negotiating optional units and previous vocational experience	481
6.336	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and previous vocational experience	481
6.337	Work experience and previous vocational experience	482

6.338	Visits to industry by students and previous vocational experience	482
6.339	Industry information packs and previous vocational experience	482
6.340	Links with other centres and previous vocational experience	483
6.341	Order of course delivery and Major league GNVQs	483
6.342	Learning tailored to individual needs and Major league GNVQs	483
6.343	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units and Major league GNVQs	484
6.344	Influences on optional units and Major league GNVQs	484
6.345	Advising students of unit certification and Major league GNVQs	484
6.346	Separate CAR and portfolio input and Major league GNVQs	485
6.347	Additional units and Major league GNVQs	485
6.348	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and Major league GNVQs	485
6.349	Negotiating optional units and Major league GNVQs	486
6.350	Separate grading criteria input and Major league GNVQs	486
6.351	Formal lecture input and Major league GNVQs	486
6.352	Study skills and Major league GNVQs	487
6.353	Student movements between vocational areas and Major league GNVQs	487
6.354	Work experience and Major league GNVQs	487
6.355	Visits to/from FE/HE and Major league GNVQs	488
6.356	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and Major league GNVQs	488

6.357	Order of course delivery and Minor league GNVQs	488
6.358	Learning tailored to individual needs and Minor league GNVQs	489
6.359	Unit delivery linked to test dates and Minor league GNVQs	489
6.360	Integration of delivery of vocational and key skill units and Minor league GNVQs	489
6.361	Integration of delivery across mandatory units and Minor league GNVQs	490
6.362	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units and Minor league GNVQs	490
6.363	Influences on optional units and Minor league GNVQs	490
6.364	Preselection of optional units and Minor league GNVQs	491
6.365	Advising students of unit certification and Minor league GNVQs	491
6.366	Separate grading criteria input and Minor league GNVQs	491
6.367	Advice and guidance on GNVQ and Minor league GNVQs	492
6.368	Separate CAR and portfolio input and Minor league GNVQs	492
6.369	Additional units and Minor league GNVQs	492
6.370	Active learning and Minor league GNVQs	493
6.371	Action planning to plan learning and Minor league GNVQs	493
6.372	Formal lecture input and Minor league GNVQs	493
6.373	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and Minor league GNVQs	494
6.374	Study skills and Minor league GNVQs	494
6.375	Specific learner support and Minor league GNVQs	494

6.376	Student movements between vocational areas and Minor league GNVQs	495
6.377	Negotiating optional units and Minor league GNVQs	495
6.378	Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and Minor league GNVQs	495
6.379	A range of resources that were easily accessible to students and Minor league GNVQs	496
6.380	Use of the library and Minor league GNVQs	496
6.381	Visits to industry by students and Minor league GNVQs	496
6.382	Visiting speakers and Minor league GNVQs	497
6.383	Industry information packs and Minor league GNVQs	497
6.384	Links with other GNVQ centres and Minor league GNVQs	497
6.385	Visits to/from FE/HE and Minor league GNVQs	498
6.386	Integration of delivery of vocational and key skill units and lead-in time	498
6.387	Integration of delivery across mandatory units and lead-in time	498
6.388	Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units and lead-in time	499
6.389	Influences on optional units and lead-in time	499
6.390	Separate grading criteria input and lead-in time	499
6.391	Advising students of unit certification and lead-in time	500
6.392	Additional units and lead-in time	500
6.393	Separate CAR and portfolio input and lead-in time	500
6.394	Action planning to plan learning and lead-in time	501
6.395	Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes and lead-in time	501

6.396	Negotiating optional units and lead-in time	501
6.397	Use of the library and lead-in time	502
6.398	Visits to industry by students and lead-in time	502
6.399	Visiting speakers and lead-in time	502
6.400	Industry information packs and lead-in time	503
6.401	Links with other GNVQ centres and lead-in time	503
6.402	Formal lecture input and lead-in time	503
6.403	Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements and lead-in time	504
6.404	Study skills and lead-in time	504
6.405	Specific learner support and lead-in time	504
6.406	Student movements between levels in the same vocational area and lead-in time	505
6.407	Individual careers advice in different centres	505
6.408	Group careers advice in different centres	505
6.409	Use of local authority careers advisor in different centres	506
6.410	Advice on using the portfolio after the course in different centres	506
6.411	Advising students of GNVQ achievements in different centres	506
6.412	Advising students of unit certification in different centres	507
6.413	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ in different centres	507
6.414	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios in different centres	507
6.415	Fast track completion option in different centres	508
6.416	Visits to/from Industry, FE, HE in different centres	508

6.417	Completing FE applications in different centres	508
6.418	Completing HE applications in different centres	509
6.419	Completing employment applications in different centres	509
6.420	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) in different centres	509
6.421	Selection of next level GNVQ course in different centres	510
6.422	Individual careers advice and different awarding body approval	510
6.423	Use of local authority careers advisor and different awarding body approval	510
6.424	Group careers advice and different awarding body approval	511
6.425	Advice on using the portfolio after the course and different awarding body approval	511
6.426	Advising students of GNVQ achievements and different awarding body approval	511
6.427	Advising students of unit certification and different awarding body approval	512
6.428	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ and different awarding body approval	512
6.429	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios and different awarding body approval	512
6.430	Fast track completion option and different awarding body approval	513
6.431	Visits to/from Industry, FE, HE and different awarding body approval	513
6.432	Completing HE applications and different awarding body approval	513
6.433	Completing employment applications and different awarding body approval	514
6.434	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) and different awarding body approval	514

6.435	Completing FE applications and different awarding body approval	514
6.436	Selection of next level GNVQ course and different awarding body approval	515
6.437	Group careers advice and centre approval experience	515
6.438	Advice on using the portfolio after the course and centre approval experience	515
6.439	Advising students of GNVQ achievements and centre approval experience	516
6.440	Advising students of unit certification and centre approval experience	516
6.441	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ and centre approval experience	516
6.442	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios and centre approval experience	517
6.443	Fast track completion option and centre approval experience	517
6.444	Completing FE applications and centre approval experience	517
6.445	Completing HE applications and centre approval experience	518
6.446	Completing employment applications and centre approval experience	518
6.447	Selection of next level GNVQ course and centre approval experience	518
6.448	Individual careers advice and previous vocational experience	519
6.449	Group careers advice and previous vocational experience	519
6.450	Advice on using the portfolio after the course and previous vocational experience	519
6.451	Advising students of GNVQ achievements and previous vocational experience	520

6.452	Advising students of unit certification and previous vocational experience	520
6.453	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ and previous vocational experience	520
6.454	Fast track completion option and previous vocational experience	521
6.455	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) and previous vocational experience	521
6.456	Selection of the next level GNVQ course and previous vocational experience	521
6.457	Use of local authority careers advisor and Major league GNVQs	522
6.458	Group careers advice and Major league GNVQs	522
6.459	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios and Major league GNVQs	522
6.460	Fast track completion option and Major league GNVQs	523
6.461	Advice on using the portfolio after the course and Major league GNVQs	523
6.462	Visits to/from Industry, FE, HE and Major league GNVQs	523
6.463	Completing HE applications and Major league GNVQs	524
6.464	Completing FE applications and Major league GNVQs	524
6.465	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) and Major league GNVQs	524
6.466	Selection of the next level GNVQ course and Major league GNVQs	525
6.467	Completing employment applications and Major league GNVQs	525
6.468	Individual careers advice and Minor league GNVQs	525
6.469	Group careers advice and Minor league GNVQs	526

6.470	Use of local authority careers advisor and Minor league GNVQs	526
6.471	Advice on using the portfolio after the course and Minor league GNVQs	526
6.472	Advising students of GNVQ achievements and Minor league GNVQs	527
6.473	Advising students of unit certification and Minor league GNVQs	527
6.474	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios and Minor league GNVQs	527
6.475	Fast track completion option and Minor league GNVQs	528
6.476	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ and Minor league GNVQs	528
6.477	Visits to/from Industry, FE, HE and Minor league GNVQs	528
6.478	Completing FE applications and Minor league GNVQs	529
6.479	Selection of next level GNVQ course and Minor league GNVQs	529
6.480	Completing HE applications and Minor league GNVQs	529
6.481	Completing employment applications and Minor league GNVQs	530
6.482	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) and Minor league GNVQs	530
6.483	Use of local authority careers advisor and lead-in time	530
6.484	Group careers advice and lead-in time	531
6.485	Advice on using the portfolio and lead-in time	531
6.486	Advising students of GNVQ achievements and lead-in time	531
6.487	Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ and lead-in time	532

	6.488	Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios and lead-in time	532
	6.489	Completing employment applications and lead-in time	532
	6.490	Advising students of unit certification and lead-in time	533
	6.491	Completing FE applications and lead-in time	533
	6.492	Completing HE applications and lead-in time	533
	6.493	Selection of another course (not GNVQ) and lead-in time	534
	6.494	Selection of next level GNVQ course and lead-in time	534
7	7.1	Timing and writing of assignments in different centres	535
	7.2	Predetermined assessment deadlines in different centres	535
	7.3	Negotiated assessment deadlines in different centres	535
	7.4	Integration across vocational units in different centres	536
	7.5	Integration of key skills in different centres	536
	7.6	Individual assignment feedback in different centres	536
	7.7	Assignment resubmissions in different centres	537
	7.8	Group assignment feedback in different centres	537
	7.9	Timing and writing of assignments and different awarding body approval	537
	7.10	Predetermined assessment deadlines and different awarding body approval	538
	7.11	Negotiated assessment deadlines and different awarding body approval	538
	7.12	Integration across vocational units and different awarding body approval	538

7.13	Integration of key skills and different awarding body approval	539
7.14	Individual assignment feedback and different awarding body approval	539
7.15	Assignment resubmissions and different awarding body approval	539
7.16	Group assignment feedback and different awarding body approval	540
7.17	Negotiated assessment deadlines and centre approval experience	540
7.18	Timing and writing of assignments and centre approval experience	540
7.19	Predetermined assessment deadlines and centre approval experience	541
7.20	Integration across vocational units and centre approval experience	541
7.21	Integration of key skills and centre approval experience	541
7.22	Group assignment feedback and centre approval experience	542
7.23	Assignment resubmissions and centre approval experience	542
7.24	Individual assignment feedback and centre approval experience	542
7.25	Predetermined assessment deadlines and previous vocational experience	543
7.26	Integration across vocational units and previous vocational experience	543
7.27	Assignment resubmissions and previous vocational experience	543
7.28	Integration of key skills and previous vocational experience	544
7.29	Group assignment feedback and previous vocational experience	544
7.30	Predetermined assessment deadlines and Major league GNVQs	544

	7.31	Negotiated assessment deadlines and Major league GNVQs	545
	7.32	Predetermined assessment deadlines and Minor league GNVQs	545
	7.33	Negotiated assessment deadlines and Minor league GNVQs	545
	7.34	Integration across vocational units and Minor league GNVQs	546
	7.35	Integration of key skills and Minor league GNVQs	546
	7.36	Individual assignment feedback and Minor league GNVQs	546
	7.37	Assignments resubmissions and Minor league GNVQs	547
	7.38	Group assignment feedback and Minor league GNVQs	547
	7.39	Negotiated assessment deadlines and lead-in time	547
	7.40	Integration across vocational units and lead-in time	548
	7.41	Integration of key skills and lead-in time	548
	7.42	Group assignment feedback and lead-in time	548
	7.43	Assignment resubmissions and lead-in time	549
8	8.1	Part One GNVQ	550
9	9.1	Schedule for GNVQ development post-Capey and Dearing	551
	9.2	Schedule for the development and implementation of changes to qualifications for post-16 (proposed in 1996)	551
	9.3	The unit structure for the New Model GNVQ	552
	9.4	Differences between the Legacy Model and the New Model of GNVQ	553

Abbreviations

ABC	A Basis for Choice
A level	Advanced level General Certificate of Education
APA	Accreditation of Prior Achievement
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
AS level	Advanced Supplementary level
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CAR	Cumulative Assessment Record
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CEE	Certificate of Extended Education
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CRAC	Careers Research and Advisory Centre
CTC	City Technology College
DE	Department of Employment
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DVE	Diploma of Vocational Education
ED	Employment Department
FE	Further Education
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education

GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
IPPR	Institute of Public Policy Research
JCNVAB	Joint Council for National Vocational Awarding Bodies
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEAB	Northern Examination and Assessment Board
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NTI	New Training Initiative
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NTETs	National Training and Education Targets
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
QCA	Qualifications Curriculum Authority
QDPs	Quality Development Plans
RoA	Record of Achievement
ROSLA	Raising of the School Leaving Age
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
RSAEB	RSA Examination Board
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SCUE	Standing Conference on University Entrance
SEAC	Schools Examination and Assessment Council
SHA	Secondary Heads Association

SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TDLB	Training Development Lead Body
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TEED	Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate
TES	Times Educational Supplement
THES	Times Higher Educational Supplement
TSC	Training Standards Council
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UVP	Unified Vocational Preparation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VQ	Vocational Qualification
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee
WO	Welsh Office
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
YT	Youth Training
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRIOR TO GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Introduction

England and Wales¹ are not alone in their drive to reform higher secondary and tertiary education. Pressures to compete effectively in the global economy and ensure social justice have resulted in education systems becoming politically sensitive aspects of society. Increasing international competition, economic and technological changes, increasing understanding of the links between prosperity and competence have resulted in a debate in most countries as to how they can raise their levels of participation and attainment. In most countries there have been moves to extend the period of compulsory education, increase participation in post-compulsory education and training and develop more coherent qualification structures which address inequalities in status between academic and vocational qualifications (Appendix 1.1 contains an overview of international solutions). In England the development of technical and vocational education² has been one of the most active areas of education during the past thirty years. The English approach has been based on trying to achieve parity of esteem between a high status academic route with traditional qualifications and new vocational qualifications. This chapter reviews the key developments leading up to and influencing the development of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) “arguably the most ambitious initiative in the history of post-16 education and training”(Ecclestone, 2000 p.539).

¹ England and Wales are hereafter referred to as England.

² Technical and vocational education have no precise meaning. In this research this is referred to as vocational education which includes technical, vocational, and sometimes pre-vocational courses and initiatives such as TVEI, CPVE, DVE and other courses offered by a range of awarding and examining bodies. On alternative occasions pre-vocational education is separated from vocational education.

The move to mass participation and attainment

Levels of participation and attainment in post-16 education and training have generally increased over the past 20 years. These levels have been positively and negatively affected by a number of factors. These include increased unemployment³, increasing availability of places in higher education, cultural and social factors - particularly increasingly positive attitudes to education - (Green and Ainley, 1995), the organisation and content of post-compulsory provision⁴, improvements in the marketing of post-compulsory provision⁵, inadequate resources or the misuse of resources, the withdrawal of benefits and grants for 16 and 17 year olds, inadequate youth training programmes and the success of some courses (for example, GCSE). Increased participation has resulted in increased attainment, specifically at 16 to 17 years of age but less improvement has been seen at 17 to 18 years (Spours, 1995). These factors have resulted in more students remaining in education or training. Other factors (internal and external) directly and indirectly influence the continuing need to further increase participation and attainment. These factors either have the effect of attracting students away from education and training (Green and Ainley, 1995) or add impetus to the need to improve participation and attainment in order to compete. The relatively high youth wages offered to entice young people to start work at 16 years of age is an internal factor that attracts students away from education and training. The use of new and increasingly complex skills in order to keep up with improvements and changes in industry and technology (needed for the knowledge economy and in order to increase productivity) is an internal factor that increases the need for students to participate in education and training. External factors are largely related to the success of other countries and their challenge to our economy, the increasing potential for free movement of labour in Europe, the perception that our workforce is under-trained compared to other countries, and the use of targets for participation and attainment in other European countries. All of these factors have increased our need to compete by providing better quality education and training.

³ Specifically any decline in the youth labour market and any relative increase in the rate of unemployment. The state of the labour market also affects the level of investment in, and provision of, training.

⁴ The organisation and structure of institutions was not only confusing but over-specialised and segmented provision post-16 had a negative affect (Green, 1991).

⁵ Particularly in the 1990s as institutions competed for students.

Historically in England, higher secondary and tertiary education and training has been linked to social class in terms of both the origins of and outcomes for its students. Even with the introduction of free secondary education in 1944 there remained a clear link between the social class background of the student, the education and training they were likely to receive, the institution they were likely to attend, and different outcomes in terms of access to further and higher education and ultimately, to jobs and employment prospects. The legislation that enabled the introduction of free secondary education (i.e. the 1944 Education Act) reinforced existing divisions with the introduction of the tripartite system⁶. Despite the argument that this system promoted parity, technical and vocational qualifications continued to be regarded as being for the academically less able and/or unmotivated students. The system perpetuated the high status of academic qualifications by promoting the ethos that everyone should aspire to Advanced levels (A levels) that were designed to select the most able students as the university elite⁷, access being restricted to the minority of high achievers. Employers and parents were most familiar with, and to a large extent preferred, A levels. This continued to make it difficult to establish any new qualification as comparable and has secured the status of A level which has remained unaltered for many years⁸. The increasing division between academic and vocational provision (the academic/vocational divide) remains at the root of the difficulties encountered in trying to establish access for all to credible and prestigious qualifications.

In 1959⁹, at the time of the Crowther Report only ten per cent of 17 year olds remained in full-time education with four per cent going onto higher education. Sixth form numbers were low and most training post-16 was on a day release or evening basis. By the early 1970s there were increasing numbers staying in education¹⁰. This was a result of the rising levels of unemployment and the reduction in unskilled jobs generally available to school leavers. The majority of these students remained in schools resulting in the formation of what were to become known as the 'New Sixth

⁶ Grammar, Technical Grammar and Secondary Modern Schools.

⁷ Academic qualifications and terminal examinations have been used at a variety of stages of education to sift out the ablest students and channel them into the next level of academic progression (e.g. the eleven plus and the Higher School Certificate).

⁸ Far from being the lynch pin of the divide, some see A levels as a multi-purpose qualification in their own right. A level can be used for access to a variety of progression routes: work; training; further or higher education.

⁹ This review focuses on the post-war period and specifically from 1976 onwards.

¹⁰ In 1973 these numbers were given a further boost by the Raising of the School Leaving Age (ROSLA).

Forms'. More recently the numbers participating in education and training have been affected by the success of GCSE. Pressure on higher education has increased as more students aspire to this level (Sutton, 1994; FEU, 1994b)¹¹. However, drop out and failure rates in A level have led to the view that many 'unsuitable'¹² students continue to take A levels.

During the 1950s and 1960s increasing demand for technicians led to a small proportion of the population attending FE Colleges for day or block release courses, gaining vocational qualifications relevant to their work. From 1974 onwards there has been a series of developments in the vocational arena ranging from the publication of national aims and objectives (The New Training Initiative) to funding initiatives (Youth Opportunities Programme and Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) and new qualifications (Diploma of Vocational Education and Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education). These developments have occurred on a regular basis and, whilst there is a pattern of adaptation and adoption from one initiative to the next (both at national and local level), the perpetual changes have created an atmosphere of discontent which continues to haunt developments. This discontent is not confined to opponents, but also includes supporters who are concerned at the failure to separate successful aspects of previous initiatives and approaches from bureaucratic systems, and the inability to establish national standards. This has contributed to the problems of establishing the credibility of vocational qualifications and promoting them as prestigious alternatives to academic qualifications.

In the 1970s and 80s the initiatives were not focused on developing high status alternatives to academic qualifications but were specifically targeted at 'lower achieving' students, areas and levels of achievement. The initiatives had a variety of origins and were often rapid responses to 'political problems' such as the rapid rise of youth unemployment or social unrest among young people. Government policy focused on increasing participation and attainment via full-time education or

¹¹ By the early 1990s nearly half of all 16 year olds were achieving the same level as achieved by only 15 per cent during the 1960s. Approximately a third of students take A levels and many feel that this part of the system has reached saturation point with approximately 60 per cent staying on post-16 and nearly 33 per cent progressing to higher education.

¹² Unsuitable in terms of GCSE grades achieved prior to entering the post-compulsory phase.

training. The first initiatives were taken by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) established in 1974 to manage temporary employment schemes in the training arena¹³. Schemes such as the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOPs, 1977-78) offered short term low level training without education¹⁴. It served to remove students from the education system and limit their level of achievement and access to progression, but was set to develop and grow over a number of years. The lack of educational experience or training in these schemes was to be an ongoing issue for the MSC. In contrast, European countries such as Germany with its Dual system and France with its vocational Baccalaureates¹⁵ promoted compulsory general education irrespective of the vocational course taken. During this period of economic recession the English apprenticeship systems declined in the number of places and length of apprenticeships offered. The youth programmes¹⁶ and funding regimes introduced during these times, reinforced the idea of reducing the duration of training¹⁷. The time serving aspect of apprenticeships was replaced by time bound government funded schemes. Whilst other countries have retained elements of time serving the English never returned to this approach, the system gradually evolving into one capable of containing large numbers of the unemployed, low qualified and the disaffected.

The major statement of national aims and objectives came with the publication of the New Training Initiative. The New Training Initiative (NTI) was introduced by the Department for Employment (DE, 1981) partly as a response to increasing unemployment, and targeted at an intermediate group which was not responding to an academic regime. NTI was a strategic plan for education and training with three basic aims, to provide systematic training for all (with all students pre-18 having the opportunity of full-time education or training), reform what was seen as an outdated apprenticeship system and achieve standards through national training objectives via an employer led training system. It was

¹³ The MSC managed the training provision of the Industrial Training Boards and allocated funding to programmes.

¹⁴ This was termed by its critics the 'new vocationalism' and in this context includes Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP) schemes, Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) and Youth Training Schemes (YTS).

¹⁵ The French have developed three distinct baccalaureate courses which are seen to attract quite separate and distinct groups of students. However, the three courses or routes have created divisions where, previously, none existed.

¹⁶ YOPs and YTS.

¹⁷ The 1980s saw the growth of training provision in the private sector. This was largely attributed to changes in the funding of vocational training.

designed to ensure England had a flexible, better educated, trained and skilled workforce. In addition, NTI would combat the problems regarding the lack of national status and credibility of vocational and pre-vocational qualifications. NTI included the first references to 'national standards' for vocational qualifications. The appropriateness of assessment in these courses became a key focus. NTI was highly influential in the development of the vocational curriculum, signalling the changing pattern of post-16 participation in further education and training¹⁸. The Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and latterly, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) and Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) were designed to deliver the objectives of NTI. As a result of NTI a three year core skills project (1982 - 85) was developed using a core skills framework which contained common, transferable skills (Lawson, 1992). As well as core skills, NTI attempted to bring vocational realism to the courses developed from its objectives.

In response to NTI, YTS was introduced in 1983 in order to provide training for those who did not want to stay in education, replace the apprenticeship system and bridge the transition between education and work. Initially a one year programme, but later extended to two years, YTS was vocational preparation with on the job training or practical skills, pre-vocational skills (via Further Education input), profiling, guidance, counselling and the development of personal skills. Whilst the schemes contributed to some of the growth in the further education sector they also had the effect of disguising youth unemployment¹⁹. YTS signalled a major shift in the control of vocational education and training from the further education sector to employers and training providers but it helped to promote the development of student-centred learning, and curriculum and staff development (Stoney and Lines, 1987). There were significant problems with YTS programmes. They had low status, struggled to attract support from industry and failed to attract the middle class, being associated with the working class, non-academic and unemployed. Completion rates were low and the quality of the programmes offered, including access to progression, varied between schemes²⁰.

¹⁸ NTI was largely based in further education and training provision, not schools.

¹⁹ The major growth in further education was associated with what became known as non-advanced further education (Gleeson, 1989).

²⁰ After the demise of the MSC the Department of Employment was given responsibility for the design of vocational and pre-vocational courses and the standards in these courses. The Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate (TEED) became responsible for the funding of these programmes. YTS collapsed towards the end of the 1980s.

TVEI was developed by the Department for Employment (DE) and introduced in 1983 to further deliver the aims of NTI. It was a funded programme of change, a means of introducing education policy using an interventionist approach and promoted as the way forward (DES, 1985). TVEI was to become the vehicle for the most significant pre-vocational development for schools and signalled the growth of pre-vocational programmes nationally. It was the first attempt to plan the vocational and technical curriculum at a local authority level, across the compulsory and post-compulsory phases for fourteen to nineteen year olds, for the whole ability range, creating continuity and bring greater vocational realism into the curriculum. Not only was TVEI unusual in that it crossed the boundaries between education and training, challenging educational control, but it represented a massive shift towards the centralisation of the curriculum by using a national framework and investment in the development of new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment as opposed to individual qualifications. It focused on curriculum entitlement, was process based and provided a whole curriculum approach (organising, managing and resourcing the curriculum to create balance). This included the use of targets and performance indicators, profiling (Record of Achievement, known as RoA), action planning by students, flexible learning, work related and residential experience, progression routes and links to other vocational provision (such as YTS and CPVE). Students received guidance and counselling, were encouraged to participate in and take control of, their own learning (via options and choices), develop work related skills and knowledge, and other core skills (such as problem solving, basic literacy and numeracy) via integrated education²¹. It supported and promoted local networking and collaboration for the planning and delivery of schemes, modularization and development of generic core skills²².

Whilst our participation and achievement rates have risen considerably since 1990, they remain low compared to other European countries with the gap between England and other countries widening the higher the age group (Green 1991; Green and Ainley, 1995)²³. This is perceived as placing England in

²¹ In 1991 the Compact Initiative was introduced as an extension to TVEI. This was specifically to encourage the development of industry links, preparation for the world of work and foster progression routes for students.

²² TVEI lasted fifteen years and proved to be the most stable of the pre-vocational and vocational initiatives, encouraging both pre and post-16 development but having little influence on A levels. The introduction of the National Curriculum resulted in a narrowing of TVEI aims.

²³ There is a sharp drop-out at 17 years of age irrespective of the type of course attended.

a precarious position in terms of competing in the global economy as the level of qualifications achieved by those who do progress to the post-compulsory phase is generally lower compared to other countries. This is in spite of increasing emphasis on the need for everyone to have education or training up to the age of eighteen years without legislating for a change to the compulsory phase of education. This lack of qualifications is a problem at all levels, from intermediate to management, and is more acute in some vocational areas (Green, 1991). There is evidence that the lack of achievement is greatest in vocational as opposed to academic qualifications (Green, 1991; Crombie White et al, 1995). As a result, there has been an increasing focus on education that would meet the needs of employers. The majority of countries have introduced targets for both levels of participation and attainment in all types of qualifications. However, the numbers achieved in England still fall some way short of England's National Training and Education Targets (NTETs)²⁴. It became vital to establish credible, coherent and prestigious qualifications if significant numbers were to be attracted to remain in education and training, and participation and attainment were to be increased.

The NTETs were derived from the 'World Class Targets' (CBI, 1989 and 1991) which were adapted and adopted after the publication of the White Paper, Education and Training for the 21st Century (DES et al, 1991) and further pressure from the Confederation for British Industry (CBI). They were intended to focus on resolving the issues of the inadequacy of participation and attainment rates. The targets were based on percentages of specific age groups achieving specific levels and, additionally, lifetime targets. They were to encourage employers to invest in the development of their employees in order to improve their business success. Individuals were to have access to education and training opportunities and qualifications after the compulsory phase of education. All education and training was to develop self-reliance, flexibility and breadth. The latter was to be specifically achieved using core skills. There was no indication as to how the NTETs would be achieved even though they required substantial growth in participation and attainment within set timescales.

²⁴ The National Training and Education Targets were introduced as a mechanism for improving the participation and achievement rates in England. Initially, the targets were to be achieved mainly through NVQs but latterly, GNVQs were to have a key role in achieving the targets, particularly for the new incorporated sector (Sutton, 1994; Hyland and Weller, 1994). The preservation of A levels also added to the pressure on the vocational route if the NTETs were to be achieved.

The new genre of pre-employment courses

England is seen as excelling at academic elitism, achieving great success at higher level academic qualifications. To maintain this reputation for high quality, high level achievement, fewer students are allowed to progress to this level resulting in expensive resources being invested in a small, exclusive group with fewer resources directed to the intermediate group of students still aspiring to progress, albeit without the basic and necessary academic achievements to access higher/other routes. By the late 1970s rising youth unemployment resulted in increasing numbers staying on in schools but England still had comparatively low levels of participation and attainment (Whiteside, 1992)²⁵. This became the driving force behind the need to develop more, alternative courses and qualifications for the New Sixth Forms. Many of these additional students were seen as being unsuitable for existing academic qualifications being either low attainers, the unmotivated, the disaffected or the vocationally uncommitted. It was apparent that this intermediate group of students did not respond to the academic regime hence their failure to gain significant academic qualifications at the previous level.

There was a need to develop alternative intermediate qualifications in both the academic and vocational sectors and to consider new approaches to teaching and learning which recognised the young adult status of the students. There was no recognised interim qualification between Ordinary (O level) and A level. O level resits (for those who had already failed to achieve at the previous level), a common routeway for the new sixth former, were widely seen to be failing. Intermediate vocational qualifications were not well developed and, compared to FE Colleges, few schools had the experience or expertise to introduce these with any degree of success. This contributed to high failure rates. Specifically developed qualifications such as the Certificate of Extended Education (CEE) introduced in 1972, were not popular alternatives. The need to develop different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment to motivate these students gained momentum. The introduction of A Basis for Choice (ABC) signalled the move to integrate pre-vocational education into the curriculum²⁶. This was the

²⁵ During times of economic recession industry withdraws funding from training activities such as the apprenticeship system and therefore this contributes to the decline in these numbers.

²⁶ Pre-vocational education was previously developed through craft, design and business courses offered within schools. These courses were to occupy the middle ground between traditional academic and training courses.

beginning of an increasing focus on education trying to meet the changing needs of employers²⁷ as concepts of the world of work began to change (Ainley, 1990) and the development of active, practical and enquiry based learning and self-supported study. This type of education appears to be unique to England. Further Education institutions have always offered a greater range of vocational courses to a broader range of 'students' (the employed, unemployed, vocationally undecided, full and part-time). New approaches to teaching and learning were particularly prevalent in this sector. These courses were designed to allow students to develop a broad range of skills required for the world of work and to motivate students by utilising alternative methods for teaching, learning and assessment. Approaches were integrated and achievement recorded in personal profiles. However, these courses catered for the bottom 20 - 30 percent and not the intermediate group (Gleeson, 1989; Mayne, 1992).

The English developed and adopted a series of solutions supposedly designed to cater for the intermediate group. Each development in vocational and pre-vocational courses was designed to address the 'current crisis' in education and/or training, forcing schools and colleges to rethink their provision. Innovations have included the increased status of the learner in teaching, learning and assessment, active and student-centred learning, cross-curricular approaches, integrated delivery and assessment, group and project work, emphasis on equal opportunities, transferable and generic skills, grouping by occupational areas or families, and strong central control cascaded to locally developed courses. These solutions have had varying degrees of success. They can largely be divided into Awarding Body and Central Government initiatives, encompassing funding, frameworks and qualifications. Awarding bodies developed qualifications in order to compete for the vast numbers of intermediate students (for example, City & Guilds 365 and BTEC First) and sometimes in response to government initiatives (CPVE and DVE). Central government initiatives were largely based on aims and frameworks and linked to funding. These were implemented and interpreted by groups and, ultimately individual institutions. The most influential of these was ABC.

ABC was produced (FEU, 1979) in order to resolve the issue of providing education and training for

²⁷ Previously there had been criticism of the lack of response by education to employers needs.

the intermediate group. It introduced the concepts of core entitlement and transferable skills. ABC provided a curriculum framework, guidelines and principles for the development of one year pre-vocational courses. It promoted new approaches to learning and assessment including a multi-skilled approach, learning linked to practical activities and work experience, establishing what were desirable outcomes, active learning, the development of principles for the recording of achievement²⁸ and integrated assessment and assignments. The introduction of ABC required staff development (staff would act as facilitators of learning), curriculum planning, a multi-disciplinary and cross-curricular approach, and networking between schools and colleges. Whilst ABC was targeted at the new and expanding intermediate group of school leavers who were not suitable for A level or apprenticeship routes, did not have jobs and who were vocationally 'uncommitted' (a pre-employment group), it actually promoted the need for vocational education or training for the bottom forty per cent of school leavers, the importance of the learning process and the need to replace resits (an academic curriculum and assessment regime that was failing a number of students). All of these aspects were to be highly influential in subsequent pre-vocational courses.

Awarding bodies responded to the challenge by developing courses which built on the principles of ABC and used specifications as opposed to syllabuses, and promoted modular or unit based courses²⁹. Initially these courses were targeted at further education but gradually became acceptable alternatives in schools. Two examples of such initiatives were City & Guilds 365 and BTEC First. Based on national criteria and a basic abilities profile (specified by the awarding body), and including personal and social skills (raising the importance of the process as opposed to the products of the courses), the actual courses were written by individual institutions (sometimes in collaboration with other institutions and/or local employers³⁰). Characteristically these courses were grouped into occupational or vocational families, ensuring that students were exposed to different vocational areas in order to help them make informed career choices. They were modular with a mix and match approach for core

²⁸ This resulted in a graded profile, the Basic Abilities Profile, based on defined areas of skill.

²⁹ Modularization was largely developed from local teacher initiatives of the 1980s (Wilmott, 1983). It is defined as breaking up the curriculum into discrete and relatively short learning experiences which may or may not have separate learning objectives and/or assessment requirements (Young, 1995). There are usually some elements of student selection in which modules will be studied and sometimes opportunities for individual modules to be accredited.

³⁰ This was to ensure the inclusion of the knowledge and competence needed for work.

and optional elements, and contained core skills, action planning and profiling. Some included requirements for work experience and a number focused on work related contexts. Delivery and assessment emphasised a broad but integrated approach (combining general and vocational education) and included assignments, projects and case studies (for both formative and summative assessment), group work, core skills, student-centred and active learning approaches³¹, real world contexts and new methods of accreditation (accreditation was school or college based with no external examinations). Achievement was recorded in profiles. These courses were increasingly offered in the new sixth forms in schools but rather than target the intermediate group were increasingly used to occupy the lower ability students post-16³². Delivery required different teaching expertise, equipment and resources. As a consequence BTEC used approval criteria to restrict which institutions were allowed to offer their courses. As a result, few schools offered BTEC courses at any level. BTEC First was targeted at the intermediate group whilst BTEC National was seen as the first real vocational alternative to A levels, being targeted at A level entrants but offered a more practical, hands on qualification. Both were full-time courses and progression routes were developed within BTEC qualifications, ultimately to higher education.

During the 1980s there were a number of government initiatives aimed at promoting developments in vocational education and training. These initiatives and their resulting courses followed each other in quick succession with each building on the previous provision. CPVE, TVEI and DVE were all to have a decisive influence on GNVQs. CPVE was a DES initiative piloted in 1984 and introduced nationally in 1985³³. It was an intermediate qualification that, theoretically, could be compared to other qualifications in terms of the level of achievement. Different levels were introduced to provide progression (including a potential route to higher education). Groups were supposed to include students of broad but average ability. CPVE emerged as the schools' alternative to BTEC First. It was specifically designed as a one year course for the vocationally uncommitted, non-academic or

³¹ Initially invented by Carl Rogers, student-centred learning places the student at the centre of the learning process (Brandes and Ginnis, 1986). Students take control of their learning and are responsible for making decisions and choices regarding what and how they study. They are responsible for planning, organising, implementing and evaluating their work. Other terms used to describe similar strategies are active and participatory learning.

³² Latterly, there was some involvement of pre-16 students opening up these courses to a wider target group.

³³ CPVE was supported by the FEU and offered via two awarding bodies, BTEC and City & Guilds.

unemployable students post-16 and latterly offered to pre-16 students. Schools used it as a replacement for O level resits. Building upon previous courses and pre-vocational principles such as ABC³⁴, CPVE was modular (a significant design issue), vocationally focused and based on a curriculum framework. The framework consisted of core competences, vocational and additional studies³⁵, active, practical and experience based learning (designed to attract and motivate students, helping them refine their career choices), and counselling, guidance and review. CPVE was very student-centred and provided a cross-curricular approach which emphasised equal opportunities. Delivery and assessment were integrated and included negotiated learning and student choice, increased emphasis on group work and projects, work based assignments, a core curriculum and skills (providing general education) and increased variety of learning experiences and assessment methods. Assessment was both formative and summative requiring teachers to give ongoing or interim assessment feedback to students, removing the 'once and for all' style of assessment associated with examinations. Assignments were collected in a portfolio and achievements recorded in a competence based profile. Networking between schools and colleges at local level was encouraged, particularly with the introduction of money from TVEI³⁶.

Subsequently, DVE set out to address the aims of TVEI and took many principles from CPVE, BTEC and City & Guilds Foundation programmes including a modular structure, core skills, formative assessment, active learning and broad vocational preparation. It was designed to combine and recognise achievement in academic and vocational studies, increase breadth and flexibility in the curriculum and bridge the academic/vocational divide (Stock and Conway, 1992; Lownham and Bowner, 1995). Flexibility was a key feature of DVE³⁷. National recognition was via a programme structure with the detail of programmes developed at local level by individual institutions. The structure required that skills and knowledge relevant to adult life, core skills, active learning, student

³⁴ This approach was to become characteristic of how new pre-vocational and vocational qualifications were accommodated within existing structures.

³⁵ Additional studies were introduced in order to bring greater parity between CPVE and O levels.

³⁶ Numbers on CPVE declined as BTEC relaxed their approval criteria in order to capture the school market for BTEC Foundation and First courses and in 1991 it was announced that CPVE would be replaced by DVE.

³⁷ DVE could be taken alongside other qualifications and was also seen as an 'umbrella' for National Curriculum subjects including Personal and Social Education, Enterprise activities, Community Service and Work Experience.

responsibility for planning their learning, assessment and progression were included in the programmes. Assessment used broad checklists which endeavoured to avoid the minute detail previously seen. Offered pre and post-16 as either a one or two year course, DVE targeted the whole ability range with the two levels (Foundation and Intermediate) creating some limited progression for students.

The reform of vocational qualifications in response to perceived weaknesses

The issue of the status and credibility of vocational qualifications was taken up in the White Paper, Education and Training for Young People (DES/ED, 1985) which promoted the need for vocational qualifications for a range of abilities and occupations and proposed a review to resolve issues of overlap between qualifications, the proliferation of qualifications and awarding bodies, and the absence of qualifications at some levels and in some occupations or vocational areas. The Review of Vocational Qualifications by the De Ville Committee led to recommendations in the White Paper Working Together - Education and Training (DES/ED, 1986) for the formation of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)³⁸. NCVQ had the specific remit to develop NVQs, to rationalise the provision of vocational qualifications by designing and implementing a qualifications framework (establishing links between academic and vocational qualifications, aiding the development of progression routes and developing parity of esteem)³⁹ and to increase the numbers of people achieving qualifications relevant to their jobs. Existing qualifications were seen to have several problems. They were based on subjects, courses and syllabuses, leading a student through a specific and restricted route and were frequently based on time serving apprenticeships. They lacked evidence of workplace competence or clear standards, a system of accrediting prior learning and achievement, and contained inappropriate and subjective assessment methods. There was a lack of lower and higher level courses to serve either

³⁸ NCVQ was not an educational body and from the outset sought to distance itself from any connections with education or the curriculum (Burke, 1995), initially, focusing entirely on qualifications for work.

³⁹ The framework would comprise a hierarchy of five levels ranging from operative to senior management. The use of levels reflected the structure of the National Curriculum but there was no direct comparison which created some confusion.

extreme of the ability range. There was a lack of progression opportunities or equivalence between qualifications from different awarding bodies as well as between academic and vocational qualifications. NVQs were to overcome all of these problems, reflect the needs of employers and candidates, extend the coverage of skills, extend knowledge and theory to include practical application, increase access to assessment, remove failure, expand availability, replace time bound apprenticeships, overcome the stigma associated with vocational qualifications by creating parity of esteem and equivalence (vocational qualifications were still regarded as low status compared to academic qualifications), and take vocational qualifications and training into the Twenty First Century⁴⁰. They were to be the first qualification designed to be comparable nationally to other qualifications at the same level and across industry. There would be NVQs in all occupational sectors and awarding bodies would need approval to offer NVQs. Later NVQs were to have a significant influence on GNVQs.

Employers were not only to be involved in the assessment of NVQs but also in the writing of these qualifications via their industry Lead bodies⁴¹ who were responsible for writing the occupational standards according to a rigid set of criteria established by NCVQ. The criteria contained a new approach and rationale to vocational qualifications which would enable NVQs to differ from previous qualifications in design, accessibility and assessment. The first NVQs were to be available by the Summer of 1987 with four levels available by 1990. All vocational qualifications introduced after June 1990 would have the same structure irrespective of industry, or occupation, and existing qualifications were to be revised to meet NCVQ criteria⁴².

NVQs are outcomes based with statements of competence⁴³. They are modular consisting of units of competence, which are then sub-divided into several elements which in turn contain a number of

⁴⁰ NVQs were also seen as a means for the workforce to improve their skills (Webb and Shaw, 1994).

⁴¹ Lead bodies replaced the Industry Training Boards in the late 1980s.

⁴² Initially, existing qualifications were submitted for 'VQ equivalence' (vocational qualifications equivalence) as it was realised that NVQs would not necessarily be entirely new qualifications. However, the concept of awarding 'VQ Equivalence' to existing qualifications proved too complex and unmanageable.

⁴³ This outcomes approach was developed from YTS and defined by Jessup (1991) as based on learning as a personal and individual experience.

performance criteria and range statements⁴⁴. This creates a requirement for comprehensive coverage of skills and knowledge. NVQs were mainly to be assessed at work (an occupationally specific form of assessment), by observation of performance with other evidence being drawn from a variety of other sources (designed to create relevance and clarity within assessment). Initially there was no external testing or written tests⁴⁵. NVQs separate the learning and assessment processes, there is no syllabus or other form of prescribed relationship with a course of learning. There are no barriers to participation, time limits on completion, age limit for candidates (unlike the apprenticeship system), entry or previous qualifications required or specific study needed. The candidate has the freedom to access qualifications, choose the mode of study and rate of completion. Previous learning and achievements can be credited towards an NVQ using Accreditation of Prior Learning or Achievement (APL or APA). The different levels of NVQs reflect different levels of responsibility, autonomy in the workplace, ability to deal with increasingly complex tasks and scenarios and an increasing range of work activities.

NVQs suffered from what was a relatively hurried introduction which affected their design, development and schedule for introduction. Not all occupational areas found it easy to equate their job roles to the criteria for different levels. A number of existing qualifications remained popular and NVQs failed to dominate the market in some industries or replace existing qualifications. This led to competition between what were seen as the tried and tested and the new, unknown NVQs⁴⁶.

Assessment and record-keeping were complex, time consuming and bureaucratic even though NVQs remained relatively narrow and did not include key skills. The number of personnel required to deliver, assess and quality assure NVQs added to the problems of work based assessment and contributed to their failure to fulfil their potential to provide cost-effective assessment and qualifications⁴⁷. Staffing, staff development, counselling and guidance, resources and recording mechanisms became high on the priority list for centre approval to offer NVQs as awarding bodies

⁴⁴ A unit is the smallest part of an NVQ that can be certificated. Each element focuses on a specific activity and stated evidence requirements that must be met by the candidate. The range statements specify the different circumstances in which a candidate should be able to perform.

⁴⁵ External testing was introduced later in response to criticisms of national standards.

⁴⁶ Non-NVQ qualifications only began to be marginalised as funding was directed at NVQs.

⁴⁷ Simulated work was used when there were insufficient opportunities, or observed assessment was inappropriate and, in some cases, to reduce assessment costs.

strove to influence improvements in provision but there was little money available, particularly for staff development. Definitions and interpretations of competence varied between centres, and between assessors within the same centre, leading to criticisms of standards. The lack of external assessment in NVQs led to criticism regarding a lack of rigour. As NVQs underwent further development there was a move to include more specific assessment of underpinning knowledge requirements⁴⁸ and integrate theoretical and practical assessment which were vital if NVQs were to be successful (Hyland, 1993). The lack of prescribed content, syllabus or methods of delivery were criticised for contributing to a lack of learning and an undervaluing of knowledge which was later to be cascaded into GNVQs (Hyland, 1994a; Smithers, 1994). The lack of time limits for completion was to be an early casualty in the implementation of NVQs. The growth in private training provision which used work placements and simulation of real work served to reduce the amount of time spent in training and contributed to the creation of a competitive market place for training and qualifications as providers vied for money based not only on outcomes but on the reduction of time to complete qualifications⁴⁹. The Government White Paper, 'Competitiveness - Helping Business to Win' (DTI, 1994) led to the review of the one hundred most used NVQs and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) by Gordon Beaumont (Beaumont, 1996). This report and the implementation issues already identified were to have considerable effect on the changes that were to take place in the redesign of units and testing that took place in the latter part of the 1990s (see Chapter Nine).

The situation prior to the introduction of GNVQs

By the early 1990s it was evident that there was still the need to bridge the academic/vocational divide, and to create parity of esteem between different routes and qualifications and provide opportunities for continuity, progression and transfer within the Qualifications Framework⁵⁰. Government policy focused on the creation of separate routes whilst encouraging the potential to combine different qualifications. NVQs were seen as second choice in the qualifications system, with

⁴⁸ Supporters of NVQs were adamant that competent performance did demonstrate knowledge.

⁴⁹ The funding regime managed by the Training and Enterprise Councils was increasingly focused on 'outcomes' achieved within ever decreasing time periods.

⁵⁰ Despite TVEI there was still a lack of progression opportunities at 14 - 19 years of age.

little parity or equality having been achieved with academic qualifications, and there were problems emerging related to their design. In 1991 new targets for the introduction of NVQs had to be set as the original targets had not been met⁵¹. By 1994, although there were more than six hundred NVQs available and approximately one in twenty young people were taking them, they were becoming available at a slower rate than had originally been planned and were not increasing levels of participation or achievement.

The continuing proliferation of vocational courses post-16 showed the need for a new framework to encompass and bring order to provision through rationalisation and standardisation of qualifications. With the introduction of GNVQs three routes, academic, general vocational and vocational were to be included in the framework. Whilst, in theory, people could transfer between routes and types of qualification some commentators doubted whether the potential to move between routes could ever be achieved (FEU, 1994b)⁵² without the modularisation of all qualifications irrespective of the route, and there was still a need to achieve greater parity of esteem in what was essentially a new tripartite system where different routes had different status.

Whilst some of the innovations of the 1980s were designed to overcome problems of parity of esteem (specifically GCSE and TVEI) there was little evidence that this aim was achieved. There was increasing confusion in the new market place of post-16 education and training where qualifications and institutions competed with one another for student numbers and funding. Most of the initiatives reflected the government trend towards full-time education and training for 16 - 19 year olds. This had the effect of extending the compulsory phase without ever increasing the school leaving age by using legislation. Many initiatives were short-lived, marginal projects. The lack of a prescribed curriculum and the integration of delivery and assessment were problematic for many of the programmes with provision differing both locally and nationally. As new qualifications have been introduced there is

⁵¹ The original target was for four levels to have been introduced by 1991, this target was amended to developing NVQs in 80 per cent of all occupational areas by 1992.

⁵² There was a subtle difference between progression and transfer between routes at the same level. A level or GNVQ students are unlikely to have the occupationally specific knowledge and skills required for work and NVQ students would lack the breadth and depth required by the other qualifications in the framework.

evidence that schools and colleges have tried to adapt or map existing qualifications into the new ones with varying degrees of success⁵³. Compared to academic qualifications, vocational qualifications have been used as the vehicle to promote new methods of teaching and learning and in this respect have acquired a reputation as being experimental (Sherman, 1991). As a result, progressive teaching and assessment methods have become associated with lower level vocational and pre-vocational qualifications⁵⁴. Apart from TVEI, there was little investment in either the initial or ongoing staff development required to introduce these new methods and approaches. There was little training or support offered in terms of coping with the need to restructure the delivery of learning and assessment or the institutional or curriculum changes required⁵⁵.

Active learning appeared to be an attractive alternative for the students taking pre-vocational and vocational programmes with the student taking greater responsibility for learning. However, it is difficult for learners to take this responsibility without acquiring a new set of skills and receiving considerable guidance. Institutions lacked the money to invest either in the purchase or development of the resources required by student-centred approaches. Many of the courses lacked progression routes. The progression routes that did exist were invariably to other low status vocational programmes such as YTS, further encouraging the academic/vocational divide. Some schools doubted the value of any new vocational qualifications and continued to offer established courses as a back-up (e.g. GCSE resits or CEE were offered with CPVE). Although qualifications were related to the world of work there were ongoing concerns that they did not reflect the needs of industry. Many pre-vocational programmes lacked access to real work skills and work experience presented logistical problems for schools and colleges as it became increasingly difficult to provide the number of placements needed. Modularisation was largely associated with learner-centred approaches. The modular approach had some advantages in allowing the formal acknowledgement of smaller units of achievement. This undoubtedly motivated some students and had the potential to create greater

⁵³ For example, the lack of match between the core skills and the national curriculum levels prevented accurate mapping in DVE.

⁵⁴ This is in direct contrast with a national curriculum that promotes traditional teaching and effectively widens the academic/vocational divide.

⁵⁵ These problems were epitomised by findings in the introductory stages of GNVQs where the level of investment in staff training and development of methods and materials has been low (Ofsted, 1994).

flexibility within the curriculum. The down side was that the division of the curriculum into discrete, short learning experiences and the associated assessment methods (including the use of profiling), resulted in assessment overload.

Courses frequently lacked external assessment which negatively affected their credibility. Internal assessment was complex and detailed and often dominated by tick-box or checklist recording of achievement. This was time consuming for staff and students and often skewed contact time towards the assessment process, reducing the amount of actual learning that took place and devaluing the learning process. Whilst the different courses had a number of positive aspects they also led to defective approaches being continued over a number of years. Target groups for vocational qualifications remained blurred but were invariably focused on the bottom 40 per cent and not the intermediate group. Unfortunately, many of the qualifications failed to attract a broad range of ability or become a true alternative to their equivalent academic qualifications. Even when new qualifications were targeted at a whole ability range they were invariably used for, or attracted, those from the lower end of the range, the disaffected, disinterested or unmotivated. This was evident in both CPVE and DVE, where low attainers dominated groups which consisted largely of those unsuitable for A levels. In this respect these initiatives became seen as a form of social control and a means of reducing youth unemployment numbers. Approval criteria for DVE centres attempted to address this but even this could not deter institutions from continuing a well established practice of creating vocational 'sink' groups. Lack of parity with academic qualifications was related to the type of student on the course and the content of the programmes which lacked knowledge (and also made progression to further or higher education less likely). Vocational and pre-vocational qualifications were rarely seen as a realistic alternative to academic qualifications and were a negative choice for those whose existing qualifications were inappropriate for progression in the academic route. The programmes invariably ended up as separate provision targeted at separate cohorts and therefore pre-vocational and vocational courses never directly competed with academic qualifications and failed to achieve parity of esteem. A number of awarding bodies and qualifications competed with one another for students

and therefore no one qualification attracted significant numbers. All of this served to perpetuate the stigma associated with vocational qualifications.

Alternative solutions to the issues

Whilst opponents of academic qualifications wanted more and better pre-vocational qualifications, they highlighted the narrowness and inadequacy of those currently available (Crombie White et al 1995). Even as GNVQs were being introduced, different factions continued to propose alternative qualifications but there was no consensus on the best way forward. The alternatives can be divided into two types. The first were over-arching qualifications which allowed existing qualifications to remain unaltered. The second were new qualifications (usually a type of Diploma) that endeavoured to combine good general and vocational education. Whilst both were concerned with meeting the government's main aims⁵⁶ and allowing credit accumulation and transfer, it was difficult to see them as viable alternatives. Over-arching qualifications such as the City & Guilds Technological Baccalaureate and The British Baccalaureate⁵⁷ (Finegold et al, 1990) were complex to administer and could not sustain their claim to increase participation being dependent on students already registered for existing, invariably academic, qualifications. New qualifications (DfE, 1992; National Commission, 1993), received the greatest support as many saw them as a means to unify the system but none were seen as the ideal answer. All of the alternatives reflected an increasing swing back towards academic achievements. However, the introduction of GNVQs gathered momentum, the alternatives were discarded and the introduction of GNVQs was planned.

⁵⁶ At this point identified as increasing levels of participation and attainment, improving the content and quality of learning, bridging the academic/vocational divide and deferring specialisation or career selection.

⁵⁷ Green (1991) noted that this qualification was more like the Swedish system than the French. The baccalaureate was to be offered through a network of Tertiary Colleges and be targeted at the full-time post-16 sector. The baccalaureate was modular and assessment was to be internal with external moderation. Work was to be judged against criteria with each module graded according to the level achieved.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GNVQS

Introduction

By the 1990s many long standing differences between vocational and academic courses remained and three further issues had emerged. NVQs were too narrow and occupationally specific to bridge the academic/vocational divide and were failing to achieve their aims. There was still a need to increase participation and encourage further growth in the numbers remaining in education and training with a qualifications framework encompassing a wider student base (DfE, 1994). GCSE resits were not successful¹, numbers aspiring to A level were increasing and this route was close to saturation. There was little point in expanding this route if it resulted in large increases in drop-out and failure rates as standards of attainment also had to be raised. The remit of resolving these problems was again given to NCVQ.

The emergence of GNVQs (1991 - 95)

The 1991 White Paper

Education and Training for the 21st Century, (DES et al, 1991) started major legislative change and contained the proposals for the introduction of GNVQs as a third route in the Qualifications Framework. The aims of the White Paper were to ensure that high quality further education and training were the norm for all 16 and 17 year olds, increase the all-round levels of attainment of young people and increase the proportion of young people acquiring higher level qualifications. Patten (1993b) had high aspirations for GNVQs, setting a target of half of all 16 and 17 year olds to be studying GNVQs by 1996 and arguing that meeting this target was essential to the competitiveness of

¹ This problem mirrored that of the 1970s when O level resits were failing a number of students staying on post-16.

the economy. If GNVQs could persuade more students to remain in education then they would be in a strong position to contribute to the NTETs (Sutton, 1994). It was important for the government to ensure that, not only did participation rates rise but also that students attained qualifications at higher levels. To emphasise this Patten eagerly promoted GNVQs as an alternative route to higher education whilst Shepherd (1993), then Employment Secretary, emphasised that GNVQs would be occupationally relevant and academically demanding. The criterion referencing used in GNVQs was seen as a positive force in ensuring that more people would achieve higher standards and therefore help to meet the NTETs (Hodkinson and Mattinson, 1994) but this was dependent on the successful implementation of the new approaches and systems encompassed in GNVQs (Sutton, 1994). GNVQs were to sit squarely between academic qualifications and NVQs within the Qualifications Framework. This role of bridging the academic/vocational divide was seen as one of the major purposes and strengths of GNVQ (Macfarlane, 1993). GNVQs borrowed their basic structure from NVQs. Some thought the addition of key skills brought GNVQs closer to academic qualifications (Rae, 1993), but in terms of structure, specifically the lack of a syllabus, GNVQs and NVQs had little in common with academic qualifications.

GNVQs would be designed to meet the need for qualifications which covered broad vocational areas, offer opportunities to develop relevant knowledge and understanding and gain an appreciation of how to apply these at work, provide broad preparation for work, require demonstration of a range of skills and appreciation of knowledge and understanding relevant to related occupations, be an acceptable route to higher levels of qualifications (including higher education) or work (a dual purpose qualification), be of equal standing with academic qualifications at the same level², be clearly related to the occupationally specific NVQs so that young people could progress quickly and effectively from one to another, be sufficiently distinctive from NVQs to ensure that there was no confusion between the two and be suitable for use by full-time students in colleges and, if appropriate, in schools which had limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the work place. The function of GNVQ as a dual purpose qualification (as a route to further or higher education, or work), was a departure from

² Post-16 provision was still complex and it was difficult to determine equivalencies or levels achieved.

the function of previous pre-vocational qualifications which had invariably been a route to further training and/or work. GNVQs would represent a real alternative to academic qualifications for the increasing number of students staying on post-16 but would be a major cultural change for schools and colleges. Patten (1993a) noted that colleges would be central in developing new provision for a range of learners and that GNVQs would play a large part in a 25 per cent expansion of further education. It was government policy to promote the newly incorporated post-16 sector as the primary means of increasing participation (Sutton, 1994) and additional funding would be made available for the expansion. NCVQ were asked to undertake the task of developing a range of GNVQs which would be offered primarily to young people in full-time education. By Autumn 1991 a consultation paper was issued. Feedback indicated that most people endorsed the main proposals for GNVQs but already identified areas for development and issues for resolution in assessment, grading and staff training (Harrop, 1992). The development of GNVQs began in the Summer of 1991 continuing up to and into, the pilot. Whilst NCVQ were keen to emphasise that GNVQs would give schools and colleges increasing control over the curriculum, both the consultation and introduction were hurried. This proved to be an ominous start for GNVQs.

Distinctive features of GNVQs³

GNVQ had several distinctive features and it is only by looking at these individually that the key issues and problem areas become clearer. The two greatest influences on the design of GNVQs were NVQs and TVEI (Appendix 2.1 contains a comparison of GNVQs, NVQs and TVEI) although many characteristics of GNVQs were adopted from other previous initiatives (NCVQ, 1995). These included portfolios (BTEC courses), networking between centres (TVEI), assignments (CPVE), and key skills and formative assessment (CPVE and BTEC). Advanced and Intermediate levels utilised aspects of DVE (ED, 1993; Sims, 1994). TVEI provided the basis for key skills and action planning. Most centres saw this previous experience as vital to the development and implementation of GNVQ

³ Viewed from the perspective of 1996.

programmes. The adoption of design features from NVQs⁴ was a 'quick fix' solution to the short timescales for development and although there were some differences in the language used, GNVQs fell into the same jargon trap. Ultimately, this added to the problems of implementation and the acceptance of GNVQs (FEU, 1993). In using NVQs as the basis for the development of GNVQs, NCVQ paid little attention to the problems of NVQs that had already been identified. These included issues with their design, the specifications, assessment arrangements, quality assurance and variable standards (Hyland, 1994c). Instead, NCVQ were eager to emphasise the differences between NVQs and GNVQs. Compared to NVQs, GNVQs offered broad vocational coverage, were work-related not work based, built on the strengths of existing provision, offered aspects of general education and were occupationally relevant whilst being academically demanding. The deliberate inclusion of broader aspects of knowledge and understanding contrasted with the over-reliance of NVQs on performance of skills. GNVQs were criterion referenced, creating the need for internally set and assessed assignments and the development of portfolios (ED, 1993).

Several distinctive features separated GNVQs from academic qualifications and NVQs. These included the need to have centre approval, the target audience, entry requirements, induction, APL, key skills, grading criteria, assessment (including diagnostic or initial assessment), the potential to combine with other qualifications, progression routes and levels, complexity, teaching methods and links with the world of work. Some of these features, such as key skills and grading, were considered more important than others (Hyland, 1994b). New and demanding approaches to teaching and learning styles were to be used to deliver the programmes. Students were to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning via action planning and the learning and assessment processes encompassed by the grading criteria. The wider range of assessment methods, the practice of allowing student access to the assessment criteria, the promotion of independent learning styles and the potential to claim unit credits were all positive features not found in academic qualifications (Sutton, 1994).

⁴ A unit is the smallest part that can be certificated. Within the structure of GNVQs the number of units is the same at each level (irrespective of the vocational area) although the number of elements in a unit can vary. Each element is further sub-divided into performance criteria and the range.

Unlike most other qualifications, centres had to gain approval to offer GNVQs by meeting specific minimum requirements judged to be essential. These included a willingness to adopt the GNVQ philosophy, allocation of adequate staffing and resources to programmes, development and use of a range of systems (such as recording and appeals), provision of opportunities for assessment and development, provision of inductions and initial or diagnostic assessment, provision of vocationally relevant learning and assessment activities (portfolios and unit tests), standardisation of assessment across groups of staff, maintenance of appeals procedures, keeping of records, participation in internal and external verification, provision of equal opportunities, cater for special needs, definition of staff roles and provision of staff development. It was clear that staff would need to work hard to develop their understanding of GNVQs, meet these basic requirements and implement ongoing changes. However, it was unclear to what extent the criteria must be met prior to approval. As competition between awarding bodies increased it became apparent that it would be difficult for any awarding body to withhold approval for a potential customer and this led to approval being granted with centres being given initial action plans in order to meet requirements. In order to successfully deliver GNVQs many staff needed to broaden their expertise, not just in terms of their vocational experience but in resource based learning, teaching and learning styles and strategies, and key skills.

Target audience

Initially, GNVQs were for use by full-time students in colleges and if appropriate, schools (DES et al, 1991) and would appeal to those students who wanted to be involved in practical applications of theory and knowledge (Shepherd, 1993). Different target audiences for GNVQs were identified including students who had not selected a career or occupation but wanted to stay in full-time education, those who preferred a vocational approach, students wanting to combine different types of qualification, those aspiring to higher education but wanting a different approach to teaching and learning, and those who did not respond to an academic approach. To some extent the target audience

for centres was linked to a centre's reasons for introducing GNVQs. GNVQs were used to replace GCSE resits and/or previous vocational courses offered (particularly at Advanced level), provide an alternative to A levels, increase the flexibility of the curriculum, raise the status of vocational provision, create a wider range of progression routes, meet student needs and to contribute to the NTETs (Ofsted, 1994). There were early indications that Foundation level was targeted at the lower ability range (Crombie White et al, 1995), or students with specific learning needs (Webb and Shaw, 1994). This misuse of GNVQ added to the problems of identifying the target audience, establishing academic equivalence and national standards but may have been indicative of an actual or perceived lack of an appropriate qualification for these students⁵. Foundation level students themselves thought GNVQ would be useful for work or applying for further courses, and help them to improve their independent learning, Information Technology, planning and communication skills (NCVQ, 1994e). However, the target groups for GNVQ generally remained blurred.

Entry requirements

Initially, the Department for Education (DfE, 1993a and 1993b) offered only general guidelines on entry requirements and advised students to ask their local school or college for their specific entry requirements. Awarding bodies noted there were no previous qualifications or experience required for entry to GNVQ programmes (BTEC, 1994). In some centres GNVQ was not a positive choice for students (Pattison, 1995). This was reinforced by the way the guidelines for entry requirements were expressed, particularly if they were lower than requirements for the equivalent academic course. At Advanced level some colleges tried to recruit students with similar grades to potential A level students and the Government tried to promote parity of esteem by using GNVQ to attract the same high quality students as A levels (Arkin, 1994a). However, actual entry requirements for Advanced level ranged from none to 2-4 GCSEs at grade C or above (Chorlton, 1994). Intermediate level was largely open access but specific entry requirements ranged from none to four GCSEs at grade E. Foundation level entry requirements continued to be expressed in negative terms. Students were

⁵ A large proportion of students took Foundation level because there was no other course available (NCVQ, 1994e).

advised that they were better off taking this level if they did not have enough GCSE grades for either of the higher levels. Foundation level has never recovered from this negative image. Awarding bodies encouraged centres to recruit realistically and target ‘the right students’ for each level (they could not insist on the implementation of specific entry requirements). This was generally defined as those who met the recommended entry requirements as a minimum but requirements continued to vary considerably between centres. Poor recruitment coupled with insufficient delivery time led to low completion rates in some programmes, or programmes running on into a fourth or fifth term as students found an academic year insufficient time to complete. Whilst this fitted in with the general ethos of ‘no time limit’ it had implications for funding and, more importantly, the progression of students.

Induction

Induction grew in importance as GNVQs were implemented. Initially, there were no specific requirements regarding the length of induction or the content (FEFC, 1994), only recommendations. Centres were provided with examples of ideal induction activities (Sims, 1994; FEFC, 1994)⁶. The importance afforded to this activity, the time allowed and content varied considerably between centres. Staff had different levels of understanding and definitions of induction. Whilst some centres included pre-course marketing and enrolment in the induction, others placed these in a separate phase. Some inductions contained a mixture of activities including enrolment, diagnostic assessment, taster activities, an introduction to the structure, requirements, assessment and grading, APL, progression routes for GNVQ students, familiarity with the programme, college, staff, other students and documents, study skills and action planning. The Quality Framework (NCVQ et al, 1995), which was to become the definitive document for the approval and operation of GNVQ programmes, clarified the importance of induction, advising on content and duration but these were not mandatory requirements. What was seen as a crucial phase of GNVQs continued to vary across centres nationally.

⁶ These were all key aspects which purportedly made GNVQ different to other qualifications taken at the same level.

The origins of core/key skills⁷ can be traced back to the 1970s but the key skills used in GNVQs were first proposed by Kenneth Baker (DES, 1989) who wanted a common set of key skills to be developed for use in all post-16 provision⁸. The initial development work was carried out by the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990) and NCVQ (Jessup, 1990) and resulted in the identification of six key skills⁹. This work was taken forward in a joint initiative by NCVQ, the Schools Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC), the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the Further Education Unit (FEU). They were to develop four levels of key skills (later extended to five), building upon the previous work of awarding bodies including BTEC Common Skills, City & Guilds Profiles, CPVE and DVE Core Skills, RSA Profiling, NCC Core Subjects, the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) Core Processes and the FEU's Core Competencies. As a consequence key skills meant different things to different people. NCVQ were eager to emphasise that the new key skills were more precise and clearer than previous schemes. The key skills were written in the NVQ/GNVQ format and promoted as generic and transferable to a variety of situations and settings, essential to every career and underpinning all aspects of personal development and performance at school, college and work (City & Guilds, 1993).

The six key skills in GNVQ consisted of Application of Number, Communication, Information Technology, Improving Own Learning and Performance, Working With Others and Problem Solving¹⁰. All key skills had five hierarchical levels from one (equivalent to Foundation) to five (equivalent to degree level). There was no requirement to progress through the levels. Changes at each level were designed to reflect an increasing sophistication and complexity in the activities to be covered, the skills required and evidence to be produced. Achievement at higher levels subsumed lower levels and students were expected to commence key skills at the next level up from the one

⁷ Hereafter referred to as key skills.

⁸ This was supported by the CBI (1989).

⁹ These included Problem Solving, Communication, Numeracy (later Application of Number), Personal Skills, Information Technology and competence in a Modern Foreign Language.

¹⁰ Problem Solving was never accredited by NCVQ as there were continual difficulties agreeing definitions, content and evidence requirements applicable to a range of vocational areas and occupations.

already achieved. GNVQ students were required to achieve the three mandatory key skills (Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology) at a minimum at the same level as their vocational units. Working With Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance (personal skills) were additional units and separately certificated for GNVQ students. Initially, these units were largely ignored by centres as they added to the assessment burden for staff and students. Key skills were promoted as helping to create a flexible system of accreditation. In theory, they could be embedded in any existing qualification (academic or vocational) and were to be the 'flexible friend' of other qualifications where they would complement, and be derived from, other achievements¹¹. However, there were concerns about specific key skills. Communication occurred more naturally in the delivery and assessment of GNVQs but Information Technology and Application of Number required more planning and consideration. There was clearly the need for additional input for Information Technology, not just for the less experienced, as identified by Hewlett (1995), but for all students to ensure that they developed skills and understanding. Information Technology presented centres with problems of resources and access, creating additional pressure on timetabling GNVQ. There was no system of credit transfer between the National Curriculum, GCSE and the key skill units although this was under discussion (Dearing, 1993) and individual centres were left to undertake this task alone.

Staff and students needed to be familiar with and understand the key skill units. Vocational staff needed a wide range of key skill achievement themselves and to be confident with all of the skills in order to be competent assessors¹². If not, they missed evidence, misinterpreted assessment requirements or applied inappropriate standards. Key skills were used differently in vocational areas and their relevance changed according to the context in which they were used. These concerns contributed to the development of a variety of approaches to delivery and assessment in different

¹¹ It was anticipated that there would be realistic and meaningful coverage of these skills in any course. Awarding bodies promoted the possibility of delivering and assessing key skills across the core of the National Curriculum with some reference to national curriculum attainment targets in Application of Number and Information Technology. Students could access any key skill at any of the five levels, selecting some areas and ignoring others, progress through the levels or skip levels as appropriate, build their own personal key skill profile or study key skills within any programme.

¹² Staff were concerned about their ability to deliver and assess key skills.

centres and different vocational areas in the same centre. Centres that chose to integrate delivery found that this impinged on the time allowed for the vocational units.

Centres were encouraged to develop assignments to facilitate the practice, acquisition and production of key skill evidence (NCVQ, 1993c) although it was unlikely that a single vocational assignment would be the source of a whole key skill element. Students needed several opportunities for assessment to ensure that they covered the range and evidence indicators at the required standard. The design of the key skill units, with large range requirements and evidence indicators, resulted in the need to create complex maps to ensure coverage of all three mandatory key skills in delivery and assessment. If NCVQ and awarding bodies had undertaken this task they could have reduced variations in practice and exerted more control over standards. Instead, individual centres were left to cope with this massive task and it took several years for many to complete a satisfactory map that ensured coverage. NCVQ continued to promote the potential for students to submit evidence from various sources (not just their GNVQ). In terms of managing the assessment process this was completely unrealistic. The solution for some centres was to use specialists to deliver and assess key skills separately although this was not always practical. It was more time consuming, could lead to the loss of the vocational context or integration of evidence which in turn could result in the production of excessive amounts of evidence. In order to ensure coverage some centres chose to undertake what can best be described as double assessment by using key skill assignments to generate separate evidence and assessing key skills in vocational assignments. Alternatively, specialists acted as advisors to the vocational team, checked assignments and specified appropriate evidence and standards whilst the vocational assessors assumed the main burden of assessment. This frequently resulted in staff assessing evidence twice using first the vocational and then the key skill specifications.

NCVQ (1993c) identified four main problems with the assessment of key skills. Assessors appeared likely to forget the original task that had been set, they sometimes completed or 'helped' with the more difficult parts of the specifications, assessment was either totally focused on performance

criteria or totally ignored the performance criteria. These were serious problems that affected the achievements of a number of students. The key skill specifications continued to adversely affect the overall assessment of students. For example, the complex design of the units continued to present serious organisational difficulties for delivery and assessment and few centres developed uniform practice across different vocational areas. Integration of delivery and assessment was evident in vocational assignments but it was debatable whether vocational assignments enabled students to provide all of the required evidence. Key skills remained a problem area for a large number of staff at all levels of GNVQ.

Grading Criteria

GNVQs were promoted as a means of developing creative and analytical thinking by encouraging students to investigate, make decisions, justify work proposals, predict outcomes and plan their work (NCVQ, 1994d). These skills were seen as being important to both employers and higher education¹³. Whilst these had always been intended as outcomes in GNVQ it was not until the grading criteria were rewritten that it became clearer how this would be achieved and assessed. The criteria were divided into themes enabling students who passed their GNVQ to gain either a merit or distinction by demonstrating additional skills and qualities. Individual units had to be graded but a final grade only applied to those achieving a full qualification¹⁴. From 1994 four themes were to be used at all levels. These consisted of Planning and Monitoring, Information Seeking and Handling, Evaluation, and Quality of Outcomes (the first two themes remained unchanged). The revisions to the Evaluation theme encouraged self-criticism whilst the Quality of Outcomes encouraged the development and demonstration of work that showed a student's overall quality and understanding, how they synthesised knowledge, skills and understanding, and demonstrated use of technical language

¹³ The process themes in the grading criteria were felt to be better preparation for higher education than the didactic approaches used in academic qualifications (Sims, 1994).

¹⁴ Guidance emphasised the key points for centres. Vocational work was the source of grading evidence, evidence must be graded against the criteria, a third of the portfolio must meet the requirements, there must be ongoing and indicative grading throughout the programmes and the final grade would be decided towards the end of the programme (NCVQ, 1994g and h).

appropriate to the vocational area. Essentially, the grading criteria focused on a student's ability to manage their learning and develop their independence by taking responsibility for their own work. The grading themes were also linked to the increasing complexity of work, the need to make decisions, prioritise and adapt the structure of work, the level of independence in producing the work, and whether students undertook discrete or complex tasks. The latter was included to help staff differentiate between merit and distinction grades. These concepts did little to resolve issues of standard or level as staff had little time to develop their understanding of them prior to implementation.

Grading criteria needed to be introduced at an early stage so that students could develop their understanding of the themes and skills required but there was no evidence to suggest that this was the case or that grading was delivered separately. The potential for students to take responsibility for their own learning was restricted by the design features of NVQs which had been adopted in GNVQs (Hyland 1994a) and the language further inhibited students' understanding of the requirements. Intermediate students found grading particularly difficult to understand (Sims, 1994). There was some confusion at all levels regarding action planning which took place in two stages. Initial action planning should have been part of the induction taking account of previous achievements, interests, preferences and aspirations as well as learning needs¹⁵. It was a major feature of GNVQ programmes and the first step in encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. This encouraged development of self-confidence and learning skills, including an understanding of their own learning. Ongoing action planning and monitoring for assessment involved setting targets for the study and completion of assignments, projects and units. This increased pressure on staff (and created an additional need for staff development) to facilitate action planning across the programmes and for individual or flexible assignments to facilitate real action planning (Sutton, 1994). In order to promote grading many centres produced standard forms to be completed by students every time they undertook an assignment. These forms and the evidence for grading had to be assessed in addition to the vocational and key skill evidence.

¹⁵ These plans included which units would be studied and when, and the activities to be undertaken to generate the evidence for the assessment of these units and grading opportunities.

Five major problems emerged with the grading criteria (ED, 1993; FEU, 1993; ED, 1994; FEFC, 1994; Ofsted, 1994; Sims, 1994; Sutton, 1994; FEU, 1994a and b; Young et al, 1995). Firstly, interpretation of the requirements and standards varied. As a result there was the need to standardise across vocational areas, programmes, centres, staff and awarding bodies. Secondly, proformas and paperwork used by centres were not always suitable and potentially inhibited achievement but were needed to prompt attempts at the criteria, for students to learn the criteria and how to provide evidence for them, and to provide evidence to awarding bodies and NCVQ that students had access to, and feedback on, grading. Thirdly, the criteria themselves led to a mechanistic approach which was largely born out of a student's success. Students repeatedly used successful formulas, phrases, sequences of activities and information which were not necessarily applicable to the work produced and, unless all the grading evidence were assessed en masse, were difficult to spot in isolated pieces of work. Fourthly, the criteria did not exclusively measure the success and skills of the student. They were also a measure of the centre, the understanding of the staff and their ability to develop these skills and student-centred approaches and access to resources. Finally, in all vocational areas, there were some units which were less appropriate for grading.

Assessment

Unlike previous qualifications, GNVQs attempted to develop national standards via the specifications, and systems and procedures for assessment. The assessment methodology for GNVQs was very similar to NVQs being largely influenced by the common design features. Staff needed to understand the structure and its implications for the sequence of activities or mechanisms which comprised the assessment process (ED, 1993). Information from awarding bodies was very focused on the assessment of GNVQs with little importance being placed on the delivery of the qualification. The outcomes for each element and unit were supposed to provide a framework for planning teaching activities. This approach appeared to encourage one of the most extreme forms of teaching to the test¹⁶.

¹⁶ In this case, teaching to the assessment process.

GNVQ assessment could be divided into internal and external. Internal assessment could be further sub-divided into initial and/or diagnostic assessment, and portfolio assessment. Initial and diagnostic assessment were a means of increasing retention and achievement by ensuring that students were allocated to appropriate levels and vocational areas (FEU, 1994a)¹⁷. It included informed guidance, screening for key skill levels and diagnosis of specific learning needs. Portfolios contained the ‘course work’ or evidence of achievement for grading, vocational and key skill units¹⁸. For some staff and students, portfolios became a complex paperchase, as they grappled with collecting all the documentation associated with assessment. Further advice was urgently needed for this activity to be successful¹⁹. For some students, constructing a portfolio proved to be a distinct hurdle to the completion of their qualification. The assessment process started with students and tutors identifying the evidence required²⁰. Students then collected or produced the evidence and presented it to an assessor. The theory of the student selecting the evidence for the portfolio was unrealistic and hence this flexibility was quickly lost from the qualification. The sheer logistics of an assessor dealing with 25 different assessment plans and/or types of evidence for each element within GNVQ would have resulted in a massive administrative and assessment workload. The portfolio work had to be internally assessed and verified, and then externally verified. Initially, assessors were required to ‘sign off’ individual performance criteria and range requirements, resulting in masses of paperwork for each element. Assessors checked the validity, sufficiency, reliability, authenticity and currency of any evidence presented by a student. They were required to give written feedback to each student, commenting on the vocational, key skill and grading requirements covered in an assignment, how and why evidence did or did not meet the assessment requirements and give suggestions for improvement (all of this had to be recorded). This system resulted in the ‘tooing and froing’ of work between a student and an assessor until it was complete. Many centres designed their own paperwork to accommodate the assessment process. Centres used between four and twelve pieces of paper or forms per assignment, using these to record assessment and feedback. These sheets had to encompass

¹⁷ However, problems of retention and achievement could not be resolved by initial assessment alone, centres also needed to monitor attendance and review progress, already requirements of programmes.

¹⁸ All units required evidence of achievement for all of the outcomes listed for the unit.

¹⁹ Pilot centres highlighted the need to address the development of portfolios (ED, 1993).

²⁰ NCVQ promoted this approach as a means of reducing the workload for staff (NCVQ, 1993b and 1993c). Evidence could take many forms (performance, written work, records) but it soon became apparent that performance evidence was less likely to be used in GNVQs.

grading, key skill and vocational evidence. Students and assessors completed all of these forms in addition to completing and assessing the actual assignment. Every time a new requirement was introduced centres had to change their paperwork. Diverse approaches to recording contributed to problems of implementing standards. Whilst proformas and checklists were seen by some as not necessary it soon became clear that many staff and students could not cope without these prompts.

In order to regulate the portfolio assessment process the recently introduced Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) awards were adopted from NVQs and used as part of the GNVQ quality assurance structure. Quality assurance had a hierarchical structure of assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers²¹. Assessment required major staff development, not just to ensure that staff gained qualifications, but to enable staff to develop assessment skills. Assessor and internal verifier awards were costly (FEU, 1993), took no account of previous experience or expertise and took 60 - 80 hours to complete (Nash, 1994a). Internal verifiers were to sample standards across assessors and vocational areas. There was little understanding of internal verification, limited evidence of it taking place and strategies for implementation were slow to develop (RSAEB, 1994). Internal standardisation activities were not a mandatory requirement even though the structure of GNVQ created a need for standardising assessment. External verifiers took a further sample of work to check systems and standards. External verification was contentious from the beginning with increasingly comprehensive guidance on how to verify being issued over a number of years²². The three awarding bodies operated in different ways providing differing levels of support and styles of verification. GNVQ Planning and Assessment Units were introduced in 1995 replacing TDLB qualifications for assessors but not for internal or external verifiers. These units addressed issues of planning and delivering that were specific to GNVQs.

As evidence indicators were introduced (1994), students focused on the range as required in the

²¹ Assessors were required to obtain qualifications D32 and D33, internal verifiers D34 and external verifiers D32, D33 and D35. These qualifications were only introduced in March 1992 a few months prior to the introduction of GNVQs. Initially, centre management did little to provide time to complete assessment and verification. This was probably due to centres underestimating the demands of the quality assurance systems.

²² This reflected the criticisms of GNVQ and more specifically the external verifiers role, and the changes that were continuously implemented.

evidence indicators, reducing some of the assessment burden. Assignment design became an important feature of GNVQs enabling mapping of, and planning for, achievement. Evidence generated from assignments could be varied as long as it met the requirements for coverage and sufficiency stated in the evidence indicators. However, the evidence indicators were highly repetitive in terms of the type of evidence required (invariably a report) leading to further criticism from centres (Lowham and Bowner, 1995)²³. The majority of assignments were based on individual elements although some centres used larger, unit based assignments. Integration of assessment across vocational and key skill units had the potential to reduce both the delivery and assessment burden. However, an integrated approach conflicted with unit credit systems which were used to motivate students and therefore was not always appropriate (Lau Walker, 1995). Students, who did not achieve the full award may not even achieve unit certification if several integrated assignments remained incomplete or below standard. As a compromise, some centres clustered units for delivery and assessment. Generally, unit certification became indicative of the failure to complete the whole qualification.

Externally set and marked unit tests complemented portfolio assessment (Utley, 1994a). The tests were seen as important in promoting public confidence in the rigour, standards and consistency of assessment. They confirmed the students underpinning knowledge and understanding of the range for each unit. This was a major task as the range statements for each unit were extensive. The tests were seen as a tremendous burden and excessive in comparison to academic examination regimes²⁴. People debated what would be an appropriate style for the tests. Multiple choice question papers were thought to give boys a better chance of success (Utley, 1994a) and were favoured by awarding bodies as cheaper and easier to mark. Use of these led to criticism from those who wanted written exams for both NVQs and GNVQs (Smithers, 1993; Utley, 1994a). Short answer or essay style questions were associated with increased rigour in assessment systems and the testing of higher order skills and reasoning. Some of the unit tests conflicted with the delivery, were criticised as technically inadequate or simply proved to be inappropriate as multiple choice papers. Some centres entered

²³ As a result NCVQ issued further guidance on what constituted a report and how different types of report and formats could be developed to vary the workload and style of working for the students.

²⁴ Intermediate students took approximately six one hour tests and Advanced students eight.

students for every test opportunity for each unit until they had passed them all. This was irrespective of whether the unit had been studied prior to the test. NCVQ philosophy was that students could resit tests until they reached the required standard. Perceptions of the value and role of the unit tests varied considerably. Initially, few students found the tests difficult but the failure rate was high, leading to criticism (TES, 1993; NCVQ, 1994e). Only some students related the tests to the course they were studying (NCVQ, 1994e). Some students 'passed' portfolio assignments but failed unit tests, resulting in the de-motivation of a number of students (ED, 1993). Students could repeat tests and resubmit portfolio work ad infinitum. The requirement for every thing to be passed and the use of two forms of testing on the vast majority of mandatory units rendered it almost impossible for many students to complete a unit without some aspect being resubmitted, particularly in the early stages of a programme.

Developing the potential to combine GNVQs with other qualifications

One of the major benefits and a unique feature of GNVQ was the potential to combine it with academic or other vocational qualifications (City & Guilds, 1993; ED, 1993; City & Guilds, 1994a; DfE, 1994; Sutton, 1994). GCSEs, A or AS levels could be combined with any level of GNVQ²⁵, either complementing or contrasting the vocational area. GNVQs could also be combined with NVQs, the most practical method being to study and be assessed for separate units in each qualification. It was thought that NVQs in particular would enhance the career prospects of students by allowing the development and accreditation of specific vocational skills.

Although some centres thought there was an explicit relationship between GNVQs and academic qualifications (FEU, 1993), there was a need to map the content and assessment requirements across all qualifications for this to be successful²⁶. Centres were encouraged to audit their curriculum if GNVQs were to be linked to other qualifications (ED, 1993). The potential to combine GNVQs with

²⁵ An Intermediate level could be combined with two or three GCSEs (possibly resits), and an Advanced level combined with an A level or two AS levels.

²⁶ There was no explicit relationship between qualifications in the Qualifications Framework.

other qualifications was dependent on modularisation and the equivalence or values given to modules and groups of modules (Webb and Shaw, 1994)²⁷. As early as 1993 there was an agreement between NCVQ and Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board to draft modules for use in A levels and GNVQs (Nash, 1993). Even though a comparability study explored the common content of Advanced GNVQ and A levels (Nash, 1993) NCVQ and awarding bodies again failed to take the lead in creating qualification maps (just as they had done with the mandatory key skills).

Combining GNVQs and NVQs was hampered by several factors. The specifications were incompatible. The number of awarding bodies offering both qualifications varied and many had different systems which added to the workloads of centre staff²⁸. Mapping and assessment were costly (Webb and Shaw, 1994)²⁹. Staff, particularly in schools, lacked vocational experience (CAPITB, 1994; Ofsted, 1994). Registration and certification costs were high. Even in vocational areas where there were established NVQs, GNVQs were regarded as being too academic for links to be made (Sims, 1994). Timetables also restricted access to combinations. Combining GNVQs with academic qualifications appeared to have greater potential with centres structuring timetables and management systems to facilitate these combinations with nearly half of students taking their GNVQ with academic qualifications, mainly resits, for GCSE English and Maths (Webb and Shaw, 1994; Ofsted 1994). Other than this there was little evidence to suggest that combinations of GNVQ and academic qualifications actually occurred. Whilst some centres tried to offer GNVQs alongside another qualification others found that the pressure this created was so acute that students often failed to complete their GNVQ if they took additional courses (Hewlett, 1995)³⁰. Moreover, few colleges had developed the support systems necessary for students who combined courses from different routes (FEFC, 1994). If NVQs were regarded as too occupationally specific to combine with GNVQs, A levels were viewed as too academic and subject bound (Hyland, 1994a). Part of the problem was the contrasting teaching and learning styles used in the different qualifications. Appendix 2.2 contains a

²⁷ Although an Advanced level GNVQ was equivalent to two A levels (or four AS levels) with six vocational units equivalent to one A level (or two AS levels) these groups of units had no value or currency in the employment or higher education market.

²⁸ Staff would struggle to run two bureaucratic and paper laden systems (Brown, 1994; Sims, 1994).

²⁹ Any evidence from GCSE coursework had to be reassessed against the GNVQ criteria.

³⁰ It is interesting to note that BTEC First, previously operated on a full time table and there was no scope to combine this qualification with others (Bailey, 1995).

comparison of Advanced level GNVQ, A level and NVQ level 3. Other demands of GNVQ took priority over resolving the issues of combining qualifications. The common model of provision was to deliver GNVQ as a separate educational programme (Sims, 1994). Very few centres offered individual units of GNVQ to other students as it was unclear how they were valued for progression.

Progression routes and levels

Initially, there were to be three levels of GNVQ with higher levels (four and five) to be developed later. Foundation and Intermediate level consisted of four mandatory and two optional vocational units plus the three mandatory key skills. Advanced level had eight mandatory and four optional vocational units plus the three mandatory key skills. GNVQ was intended to be a multi-purpose qualification providing a range of progression routes for students (either work or further or higher education), enabling them to keep their options open. Some evaluations of GNVQ questioned whether some of the progression routes really existed or were realistic options for GNVQ students (FEU, 1993; ED, 1993). GNVQs as a route to both employment and higher education was seen as being overly ambitious as, essentially, these were conflicting aims (Ainley, 1995). GNVQs should have helped delay student choices and enabled students to make more informed career choices (Wren, 1995) but there was little evidence to support this belief (FEU, 1994b). Initially, students required a lot more information on progression routes than was generally available. They needed explanations of the differences between the qualifications within the framework and progression opportunities between qualifications (Johnson, 1995) but received limited information (MacLeod, 1994). Within GNVQ there was an assumption that students would progress from Intermediate to Advanced level but progression from Foundation to Intermediate level was not necessarily as simple (ED, 1993) and was probably negatively affected by some of the target groups. Foundation level students could take units from different vocational areas providing a broader experience and enabling them to make more informed decisions on selecting a vocational area for progression. By 1994 progression from Intermediate level was giving most cause for concern. Whilst this route was preferable compared to

GCSE resits, it was questionable whether it really led to better employment prospects or whether the majority of students progressed to further, and subsequently, higher education.

There was little movement in or out of vocational areas and even less influence over the occupation selected immediately after completing Advanced GNVQ³¹. This contradicted Ofsted's (1994) belief that GNVQs provided a wider range of choices for students staying in post-compulsory education. It has since become clear that, although GNVQs provided choice in terms of making a different qualification available, there were some vocational areas which were far more popular than others (FEU 1994b; Green and Ainley 1995)³² and others were less successful in establishing their popularity with staff or students (e.g. Manufacturing). Combinations of lack of expertise amongst staff, lack of specialist facilities for delivery and assessment, and the overwhelming popularity of other vocational areas all contributed to these problems. Declining industries were partly to blame for the lack of popularity. However, issues surrounding the appropriateness of the standards and the facilities and resources required to successfully offer specific programmes also affected take-up. In addition, competition between schools and colleges inhibited the development of GNVQs across a range of vocational areas (Merrick, 1995). This resulted in students being channelled into narrow vocational routes. Progression from Advanced level to higher education was actively promoted by NCVQ and the awarding bodies. As early as 1993 the awarding bodies were citing Universities who were supportive of the new qualifications³³. Existing compact arrangements between colleges and universities were beneficial to this process but further action was needed to promote GNVQs and create actual progression routes to higher education and employment (Lau Walker, 1995). Individual studies showed that a high proportion of Advanced level students chose the higher education route but it was largely the new universities that admitted GNVQ students (Lepkowska, 1995). It was unclear whether progression to higher education was due to a commitment to higher education or a lack of employment prospects (UCAS, 1994). Equivalence at Advanced level was a major issue for

³¹ Theoretically a student could change vocational areas as they progressed to a different level but as GNVQs became more widely available there was little evidence of this occurring (FEU, 1994b).

³² Business and the vocational areas focusing on the service sector were the most popular (FEU, 1993). This was also found to be the case in the NVQ system where Catering, Administration and Hairdressing qualifications dominated provision (Hyland, 1994b).

³³ Initially, progression to higher education was a higher profile than other routes (Hillier, 1992; NCVQ, 1993a and 1993b).

progression to higher education, particularly as numbers of higher education places decreased, creating increased competition for the remaining places³⁴. Students with grade C or above in GCSE English and Maths had a better chance of receiving an offer of a higher education place (UCAS, 1994)³⁵. In some vocational areas specific optional units were seen as essential for progression to specific occupations or progression routes (Sims, 1994) and predicted grades of merit or distinction positively influenced higher education offers (Marvell, 1995). There was no evidence of progression to NVQs³⁶.

Complexity

GNVQs were the most complex pre-vocational qualification ever introduced. Staff required additional training and support in order to develop the skills required to cope with this complexity and ensure that it did not become a barrier to student achievement. The process of combining vocational, key skill and grading requirements for delivery and assessment resulted in complex, time consuming and bureaucratic structures which urgently needed reform (Spencer, 1994; Nash, 1995a; Wolf, 1995). Problems were magnified by the detailed specifications and the requirement to pass external tests. Delivery and assessment were rarely single activities, often consisting of weaving together multiple and demanding requirements for both staff and students. There were problems with the cost-effectiveness and workability of assessment. Staff struggled to develop adequate systems or procedures, or allow sufficient time for this process. Assignments could be overly complex as many requirements were included in tasks in order to avoid missed opportunities and to reduce the number of assessments required. Alternatively, they could be fragmented, repetitive and lacking in relevance as staff tried to focus on individual performance criteria and parts of the range in each element. The assessment process, including the referral and resubmission of work, resulted in a back log of work which in turn resulted in increased workloads and time pressures. All of this contributed to poor

³⁴ Funding reductions were leading to fewer available places in higher education.

³⁵ This had implications for entry requirements to GNVQ programmes.

³⁶ Some saw GNVQs as the natural precursor to NVQs (Wren, 1995) with students progressing from GNVQs to NVQs and potentially the Modern Apprenticeship system.

completion rates (ED, 1993). It created an environment of perpetual assessment which had to be accommodated alongside the preparation for the delivery and assessment of subsequent units.

Additional units were a means of expanding GNVQ and creating greater flexibility. Students could take more units than required for their qualification (extra optional, additional or the non-mandatory key skills units). There were huge discrepancies in how these units were used. Some centres offered these units (Chorlton, 1994), whilst others wanted them promoted as a central feature of the qualification (Lau Walker, 1995). However, many centres saw them as adding to the complex nature of delivery and assessment and there was little time to accommodate them within the programmes. GNVQ had the potential to be flexible in terms of variable admission and assessment times but this was not developed (FEFC, 1994). Implementing rolling admission would have resulted in a range of programme start dates throughout the academic year. The reality was that all centres found this difficult to implement.

Teaching methods

GNVQs specified the outcomes but not the course or syllabus to be studied. Schools and colleges had to design their own programmes of delivery and provide students with access to vocationally relevant learning activities. Because of the differences between GNVQs and existing academic qualifications staff needed to change how learning and assessment were managed by using a variety of approaches to deliver the programmes³⁷. Managing the student transition to manage their own learning was a significant change for many teachers and lecturers (Sutton, 1994). Staff needed to develop new skills and knowledge in order to ensure that this process was successful. The grading criteria were central to this management of learning (ED, 1993). GNVQs helped to motivate students, raising their self-esteem (Solomon, 1995). Motivating factors were linked to the style of delivery, unit accreditation, student-centred approaches (Hyland and Weller, 1994), flexibility (including variable duration of programmes) and the potential to create individual programmes of study (ED, 1993; City & Guilds,

³⁷ The learning and delivery styles employed included assignments, group work, oral presentations, simulations, case studies, practical work, independent study, role play, educational visits and work experiences (Sims, 1994).

1993; FEU, 1993; Dearing 1993). The student-centred nature of GNVQs, specifically the move towards students taking more responsibility for the learning process and their work, was an important and attractive feature of GNVQ (Sims, 1994; Ofsted, 1994; Pattison, 1995)³⁸. However, there was direct conflict between student-centred methods and the need to use formal teaching methods to meet the requirements of the assessment regime (FEU, 1993) and this focus on assessment may have prevented the development of the vocational themes within the programmes (FEFC, 1994). Little consideration was given to the best ways of delivering GNVQs although structured lessons were seen as less important. The absence of specified delivery and learning methods resulted in the downgrading of the learning process (Knasel and Mead, 1994). Lack of suitable learning packages (Sims, 1994) left many staff trying to design and delivery programmes from 'scratch' or adapt materials from previous programmes (ED, 1993). This was a direct result of the short lead-in time allowed (FEU, 1993; Nash, 1994a) and the continuing lack of good quality support materials. All these issues added to the problems of implementing national standards. The absence of networking between centres slowed the dissemination of good practice and materials which centres were reluctant to share with potential competitors.

In theory, Intermediate and Advanced levels could be delivered as a common course in order to help students keep their options open in the early stages of a programme. However, staff found it difficult enough to design the delivery of individual units at a single level let alone provide for two levels in one group. As a consequence, few centres used this approach. Most staff delivered the vocational units in the order they appeared in the specifications even though the order could be varied to take advantage of access to facilities, work placements and other opportunities (some centres did use this approach). More than one unit could be delivered at once by developing teaching themes across units via projects and assignments (NCVQ, 1994d). Centres varied their approach to delivery not only in style but also in the time allowed for each unit³⁹.

³⁸ These approaches were typically used in vocational education but were not types of vocational education.

³⁹ Sometimes this was spread over 36 weeks, at other times over four or five weeks.

GNVQs were described as having practical applications in employment. Some centres saw links with industry as very important (Lowham and Bowner, 1995), but others took advantage of the lack of work experience requirements as this removed the pressure for external links (FEU, 1993)⁴⁰. Within a year more centres were offering work experience, particularly with Advanced level programmes (FEFC, 1994). Other than this, industry was rarely involved either with individual centres or on a national basis. The promotion of GNVQs to industry was a slow and painful process which was partly due to their similarity to NVQs which suffered from negative publicity.

The introduction of GNVQs

The education climate

As GNVQs were introduced the emphasis within education and training was changing. The focus became the student as the consumer rather than the provision and qualifications. There was increasing competition between education and training sectors and individual institutions within sectors, creating a market led approach. The Further and Higher Education Act (1993) was swiftly followed by the Incorporation of Colleges of Further Education (1993) which removed the colleges from Local Education Authority control. As a result Sixth Form Colleges were placed on a more equal footing with Technical and FE Colleges, opening up the possibility of competition. Coupled with the increasing competition from schools, in the process of developing their own sixth forms, this created an environment where all post-16 institutions were competing not only for numbers but for the better students who would enable them to access funding via increasing levels of achievement⁴¹. This emphasis on competition has undoubtedly increased the divisions between institutions, curriculum models, assessment methodologies (and the administration of assessment), with the pressure

⁴⁰ This attitude did vary between vocational areas and centres.

⁴¹ To a lesser extent, schools had already been affected by the Education Reform Act (1988) which was the vehicle for introducing the Local Management of Schools and the option to acquire Grant-Maintained status.

frequently being increased by funding issues.

Competition between qualifications was reinforced by the Qualifications Framework. The reason a student chooses one route or qualification as opposed to another has become central to the increasingly important marketing of qualifications and institutions⁴². The government stance was that competition between institutions would drive up standards and enhance the quality of provision (Boswell, 1994), but opponents viewed competition as wasteful and detrimental to effective local provision, by discouraging collaboration (Hillier, 1995). In 1994 a further White Paper 'Competitiveness' was issued (DTI, 1994). This had implications for GNVQ, including the possibility of further changes⁴³. The same year Dearing moved on to review 16 - 19 provision and to advise on strengthening, improving and consolidating the Qualifications Framework for this age group whilst still preserving the status and position of A levels. Dearing supported a national qualifications framework but acknowledged that the qualifications in the two vocational routes, GNVQs and NVQs, could not cater for the needs of all students and employers⁴⁴. The Qualifications Framework and the two new qualifications had initially failed to fulfil the purpose of rationalising the provision. It was clear that easier progression and transfer between the routes was needed if there was to be a flexible system that catered for a variety of educational and training needs. There was also an urgent need to stem the drop-out in A levels and Advanced GNVQs (Dearing, 1995).

The pilot phase

Schools and colleges were committed to change and GNVQs were seen by many as a solution to the current problems in education and training. They would be offered in a restricted number of

⁴² The choice of institution could be highly influenced by the student's previous academic achievement.

⁴³ This included the possible demise of GNVQ and the introduction of a new General Diploma which would over-arch the current framework and would be awarded irrespective of the type of course followed - yet another tactic employed by the government to avoid the merging of post-16 qualifications and ensuring the preservation of A levels.

⁴⁴ Dearing concluded that these qualifications could not replace all of those that they were originally intended to replace. Not only did Dearing support the framework but he noted that certain subject areas should be allocated to specific routes within the framework. This appears to be either an acknowledgement of the predominance of certain subjects in specific routes (e.g. Service sector NVQs and GNVQs) or a further push to ensure the system evolved in this direction resulting in an even greater academic/vocational divide.

vocational areas (fifteen) and by only three awarding bodies. The introduction of fifteen vocational areas at three levels was to take place over five years (Appendix 2.3) with national availability of the first five areas at Intermediate and Advanced levels from September 1993. Whilst some vocational areas already had established qualifications (e.g. Business), others were developed as combinations of existing qualifications (e.g. Health and Social Care). The phasing in of pilots and the full availability of vocational areas and levels undoubtedly set a fast pace for the design and development of GNVQs.

1992 saw the introduction of the pilot phase which was limited to 108 schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. NCVQ selection criteria for the pilot centres specified they should have previous experience of vocational education, an existing relationship with an awarding body, be geographically spread, include schools⁴⁵, Sixth Form and FE Colleges, be prepared to offer at least two of the five pilot areas (Art and Design, Business, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism and Manufacturing) at both Intermediate and Advanced levels (to provide progression)⁴⁶ and recruit full-time students⁴⁷. Recruitment of both pilot centres and students was hurried with many centres only deciding on the vocational areas to be offered at the start of the Autumn term in 1992. Although GNVQs were produced in response to the needs of education and, in particular, the needs of further education (Webb and Shaw, 1994), FE Colleges used various models of franchise agreement to extend GNVQ provision to local schools (Arkin, 1994a). The number of schools participating via franchise arrangements with colleges meant that the actual number of institutions offering GNVQs far exceeded the pilot figure and contributed to the target number of students being exceeded by nearly 60 per cent⁴⁸. The size of the centres varied considerably both in the number of programmes offered and the student numbers (Harrop, 1995) but nationally, the student numbers were fairly equally divided between Intermediate and Advanced levels.

⁴⁵ Even though GNVQ was originally only to be offered in schools 'if appropriate' they were already being included on a considerable scale via the pilot.

⁴⁶ NCVQ knew that Business would attract more interest and numbers and therefore wanted to encourage development of other areas. Manufacturing was expected to have a low take-up.

⁴⁷ It was thought that part-time students would take too long to complete their GNVQ and provide relevant feedback.

⁴⁸ Target 5000 students - actual 8800 (Harrop, 1995).

Awarding bodies provided extensive briefings for centres on the structure and implementation of GNVQs. These briefings and reviews continued on a termly basis. In the latter part of the Autumn term the first review of the pilot showed that only half of the centres had planned how key skills would be delivered and assessed with many ignoring them in the first term. Staff clearly did not understand the importance of key skills as a mandatory requirement. Pilot centres thought that key skills should be a natural part of learning with evidence provided through a range of activities. Some centres developed their use of key skill specialists for separate delivery (NCVQ, 1993c; Wren, 1995). Others used specialists and key skill workshops to provide learning and supplementary evidence with other evidence integrated with the vocational evidence. Integration was seen as an important issue (ED, 1993). In March, staff in schools and colleges expressed dissatisfaction with the grading criteria⁴⁹ (Harrop, 1995). Grading was new to most staff and caused some confusion, particularly as to when portfolios should be graded or feedback given (not all staff were providing interim judgements or formative feedback on these skills). There were also problems with the external tests. The format, length and content for tests were comparatively unknown at the start of the pilot. There were four testing opportunities proposed that year and although specimen questions were distributed by the awarding bodies they noted that the actual tests might vary due to ongoing development issues⁵⁰. The lack of exemplar tests and changes to the style of testing and the specifications caused concern amongst staff and created additional pressure. Examples of assignments to produce portfolio evidence were issued and centres were introduced to different types of evidence, including supplementary evidence. To add to the growing confusion the external tests and APL were sometimes wrongly referred to as supplementary evidence⁵¹.

There were many groups and organisations with a vested interest in the pilot phase of GNVQs (Appendix 2.4) and there was to be extensive evaluation. Most of these reports contained no quantitative data and whilst they contained some criticisms they were largely positive and sought to

⁴⁹ Consisting of three themes Planning and Monitoring, Information Seeking and Handling, and Evaluation

⁵⁰ Tests were originally written by individual awarding bodies to specifications set by NCVQ. It wasn't until 1994 that City & Guilds and RSAEB combined to produce tests and 1995 when all three awarding bodies were required to work together on test production.

⁵¹ Supplementary evidence was normally evidence added to an assignment after the initial assessment in order to ensure the work met the required standard.

promote GNVQs as being well received by both staff and students. However, they also exposed many issues ranging from centre needs, the variability of provision and problems arising from design. In hindsight centres noted several areas that should have been addressed prior to the introduction of GNVQs (NCVQ, 1993a and 1993b; ED, 1993; FEU, 1993). It was important to have the support of senior management, to review staff and learning resources, establish administrative systems, ensure staff were trained and had access to up to date and relevant information from NCVQ and awarding bodies. More worryingly, no two centres offered GNVQs in the same way and considerable variations in provision were emerging (ED, 1992; FEU, 1993; WJEC, 1993; Ofsted, 1994). These included the time allowed for delivery (anything between eight and 26 hours per week was allocated irrespective of the level), resources (including staff expertise), design of learning programmes, delivery and assessment of vocational and key skill units, and recruitment and selection of students (including the use of APL/APA). A number of these variations could be attributed to approaches adopted in different types of institution and they clearly affected student achievement⁵². Students in the pilot centres expressed concerns about the market value of GNVQs, questioning their equivalence with GCSEs and A levels. In addition, students needed to be more closely matched to the level of GNVQ in order to provide realistic opportunities for achievement.

Variations were compounded by serious problems emerging from the design of GNVQ. Specifications (vocational and key skill) were difficult to understand, interpret and implement in terms of judging what was required and the level to be achieved⁵³. Centre staff struggled to understand the relationship between the performance criteria and the range and how this influenced what and how much evidence should be produced. Varying assessment methods and interpretations of specifications resulted in a lack of rigour and variable standards. The administrative systems designed to support and provide evidence of achievement were bureaucratic, paper laden and unmanageable. Recording achievement required the design and use of complex checklists. Rather than enhance assessment these proved to be a barrier for staff and students. External testing was heavily criticised with centres suffering acutely

⁵² Colleges tended to offer GNVQs with additional units or modules of other vocational courses whilst schools combined GNVQs with academic qualifications.

⁵³ Specifications were considered to be either too prescriptive and complex or too simple and lacking in detail (Harrop, 1992).

from lack of, or late information and changes to the design of tests. GNVQ design issues spilt over into the tests which were based on knowledge specifications that repeated the complex and detailed style of the unit specifications but contained no obvious relationship. All this created an urgent need to rewrite both vocational and key skill units. However, there were some positive aspects of GNVQ. Centres liked the system of unit credit (it motivated students), the idea of the mandatory key skills, the breadth of the vocational areas, the lack of requirements for work based assessment (in contrast to NVQs), the potential for flexible curriculum planning for groups and individuals, and the experience of gaining assessor and internal verifier qualifications. College staff believed that GNVQs would help to raise the status of vocational qualifications as well as increase levels of participation and achievement (FEU, 1993). However, problems continued to detract from the positive aspects and student achievements. Some centres were sufficiently concerned to offer GNVQ students dual accreditation (GNVQ with either DVE or BTEC First) in order to ensure that they emerged with at least one qualification⁵⁴.

With so many issues consistently identified in reports from various sources it would have been reasonable for the pilot to be extended and for further centre approvals to be put on hold whilst the considerable number of much needed improvements were piloted prior to their introduction. Instead, the introduction and national launch gained momentum. The Government continued to promote GNVQs as an important option for students (Patten, 1993b). No one seemed willing or able to take the decision to defer the national launch and prevent the magnification of problems by allowing what was to be an unprecedented take-up of the latest pre-vocational qualification.

Findings from the pilot phase led to a series of major changes. Centres were advised to provide an induction as the framework for the initial action planning and assessment of students (NCVQ, 1993a and 1993c). This was to ensure that students were recruited to appropriate programmes and levels. Vocational and key skill units were revised and reissued in April 1993 ready for the national launch in September⁵⁵. Post-16 progression became part of the agenda for action (ED, 1993). The rolling

⁵⁴ This was similar to the use of CEE as a back-up when CPVE was introduced.

⁵⁵ Some units were inappropriate and the standard demanded was inconsistent (FEU, 1993).

programme of piloting and introduction was revised with a new target of fourteen vocational areas to be available by September 1995⁵⁶. It was announced that there would be a model for delivery at Key Stage Four (Part One) which would be offered at Foundation and Intermediate levels⁵⁷. The movement to distance GNVQs from NVQs grew rapidly. This was evident in the change of names for each level of GNVQ (Level 1 became Foundation, level 2 Intermediate and level 3 Advanced)⁵⁸.

Initially it was intended that GNVQs would replace BTEC National and First awards (BTEC, 1993; DfE, 1993a), a reason why many centres opted to introduce GNVQs⁵⁹, and A levels would continue to be preserved as 'the gold standard'. Whilst numbers of students on GNVQ programmes initially grew rapidly they did not expand at the rate originally anticipated. This immediately brought into question the ability of GNVQs to contribute to the NTETs. It was also questionable as to whether GNVQ was reaching its target audience. The Department for Education estimated that large numbers of schools and colleges would offer Intermediate and Advanced GNVQ in the first five vocational areas with some centres participating in the rolling programme of pilots for other vocational areas and levels. In 1993 approval for centres and registrations for GNVQs rose to 1500 centres, meeting Patten's target of 1500 centres by 1996 three years early (Patten 1993b), and over 82,000 students (nearly one in seven of all 16 year old students). GNVQs were big business (Lau Walker, 1995) and looked set to have a bigger impact than any other previous vocational or pre-vocational initiative. The media reported that 'GNVQ was a victim of its own success' (Nash, 1994b) with schools and colleges unable to cope with the demand for places and concerns were expressed at the rapid growth of numbers taking the programmes whilst development and revisions continued.

⁵⁶ Even in 1993 many estimated that it would be at least 1997 before GNVQ specifications saw any semblance of stability.

⁵⁷ A number of schools had been found to be offering GNVQ pre-16 during the pilot. NCVQ and the awarding bodies were quick to acknowledge the use of GNVQ at Key Stage Four although NCVQ thought it was unlikely that a full GNVQ could be offered. Their advice was that Foundation or Intermediate level offered outside the National Curriculum should be allocated forty per cent of the timetable although they acknowledged that some aspects of programmes could be delivered and assessed across the curriculum. Part One would be a reduced qualification (a subset of the original qualification, 3 mandatory units plus key skills), take twenty per cent of the timetable and be the main vocational route pre-16.

⁵⁸ Advanced level could also be referred to as Vocational A levels.

⁵⁹ The overall policy was that NVQs and GNVQs would become the main national provision for vocational education and training.

From 1993 GNVQ was available nationally with key skills (a mandatory requirement of GNVQs) available as free standing units⁶⁰. Some centres reported that identifying students for GNVQ programmes was proving to be problematic. NCVQ continued to reinforce the primary target group as 16 - 19 year olds in full-time education but acknowledged the existence of other groups (NCVQ, 1993a and 1993b) such as those at Key Stage Four, part-time students aged 16 - 19 years and adults either part-time or full-time. Whilst these groups were small in comparison to the numbers of 16 - 19 year olds taking GNVQs in full-time education, it was already apparent that centres would adopt and adapt GNVQ to suit their needs. By now registration numbers were high and the certification of students became an issue. Several thousand students did not appear in the statistics for completions. In 1993/94 16,500 full certificates and 29,000 unit certificates were awarded. This was less than fifty per cent of those registered. It was not clear whether the missing students were completing in extended time or if any of those claiming unit certification progressed to full awards. The awarding bodies appeared to be unable to answer these questions or to determine student numbers at specific registration points or times of the year. Tracking students appeared to be a serious difficulty that was clouded by the five year registration period and late registrations that resulted in hidden student numbers and inaccurate figures for drop-out and non-completion rates. Variations in the reported registrations continued into 1994/95 with anything from 164,000 (Cotton and Robbins, 1996) to 250,000 (Nash, 1994a)⁶¹ being noted as the student enrolment numbers. Completion rates also remained unclear (Blackburne, 1995). Variations also persisted in the approach to delivery and assessment between centres, vocational areas in the same centre and between staff (FEU, 1994b). The piecemeal alterations after the pilot left many problems unresolved. For example, specifications remained vague and centre staff were forced to draw on materials and approaches from previous courses in order to judge the level and scope of GNVQs (Harrop, 1995; Lownham and Bowner, 1995). Although this approach reduced preparation time the work was not necessarily appropriate and

⁶⁰ In theory, these could be taken quite separately from a GNVQ.

⁶¹ Overall, there was a rise of ten per cent in those staying in full-time education post-16 bringing the total to eighty per cent. This rise was attributed to rising aspirations of individuals and the community, increasing unemployment and changes in social policy which influenced funding.

this added to implementation problems. Many centres found it difficult to develop integrated approaches. Centres acknowledged that staff with less experience of vocational education had a steeper learning curve than others when undertaking the introduction of GNVQs (Arkin, 1994a). The proportion of new or less experienced centres that had gained approval was seen as contributing to the variations in standards between centres (Ofsted, 1994). Unfortunately, the use of funding incentives led to accusations of fraudulent certification claims (Hugill, 1994). Staff in some vocational areas questioned whether the GNVQ specifications were entirely appropriate (Sims, 1994). This led to further calls for a review of the standards, some of which were only in their first year of implementation. Major concerns continued to focus on variations in standards, inadequately developed or explained standards, lack of guidance, poor or lack of internal verification, excessive documentation and difficulty in designing courses but staff and students were still keen to make GNVQ work.

By 1994 there were claims about how much GNVQs had achieved in terms of strengthening the position of vocational qualifications but there were further significant changes made that year. The first three levels of the mandatory key skills were rewritten along with the optional and additional units for some vocational areas. The rewrites included examples and guidance which explained how to use the specifications as an assessment framework, clarification on aspects (specifically the range), glossaries to define element content, and advice on how to achieve each unit (NCVQ, 1994d). There was increasing emphasis on the evidence indicators for each element (vocational and key skill) as the minimum requirement for achievement. Centres were provided with examples of action plans, recording documents, advice from experienced teachers, tutors, verifiers and others and guidance on progression routes (NCVQ, 1994d). All this was designed to strengthen the interpretation of units and improve the quality and presentation of work. Foundation level grading criteria were reissued in September. The ongoing problems of GNVQs were well publicised (Nash, 1994a, b, c, d, e, f; Meikie, 1994) and in 1994 Boswell issued a six point agenda (FEFC, 1994) to address a number of these problems many of which had been identified during the pilot phase but remained unresolved. The

agenda stated that external testing would be tightened⁶², the role of the external verifier would be reviewed⁶³ and they would receive improved training, grading⁶⁴ and unit requirements would be clarified, jargon would be removed, further guidance and materials would be provided and centre approval criteria would be standardised. There were also recommendations for improvements to induction and delivery. Although GNVQs were receiving tremendous support in terms of numbers, it was essential to resolve the many issues in order to ensure that good quality vocational education was available (Woodhead, 1994).

Centres were concerned about employers' lack of knowledge of GNVQs and how this would negatively affect the recognition of GNVQs as a national qualification (Hyland and Weller, 1994). The first signs of national promotion and support from employers was when the GNVQ Scholarship scheme was introduced (NCVQ, 1994i), which encouraged employer involvement with individual students. NCVQ were eager to promote the benefits of this scheme and GNVQs in general to employers (NCVQ, 1994a and 1994i). Some aspects of the scholarship scheme were similar to Compact agreements but there was no guarantee of employment at the end of the scholarship. During 1994 centres themselves were fast producing policies and guidance for staff but again, most of these focused on the assessment process. They were providing students with information on all aspects of GNVQ. Study guides (for students and staff) provided basic explanations of GNVQ, the structure, content and language. More sophisticated versions added explanations of grading, key skills, certification, examples of assessment documentation and advice on progression. Typically, these guides were twelve pages long. However, any misconceptions and misunderstandings amongst staff could be cascaded to the students. By now, problems with implementation caused the deferment of several of the scheduled pilots.

Two years after their full introduction, 1995 saw further major changes within GNVQ as unresolved

⁶² Subsequently the number of testing opportunities were reduced to three a year.

⁶³ External verifiers would, in future, be required to sample standards in vocational and key skill elements as well as internal verification. The whole quality assurance system became a round of who was watching who.

⁶⁴ The rewriting of the grading criteria was designed to combat criticisms from centres that some aspects of work were going unrewarded. Some staff were basing their grading judgements on what was a 'good' piece of work. This led to the introduction of the Quality of Outcomes theme at all three levels.

problems snowballed and additional problems (some related to previous changes) emerged. In order to resolve some of the issues resulting from competition between schools and colleges some collaborative projects were introduced (Maxwell, 1995; Nash, 1995b). Additional funding (£5.7 million) was made available to NCVQ to ensure the rigour, quality and credibility of GNVQs and £1.3 million was given to the Further Education Development Association (FEDA, formerly FEU) to provide support and training for GNVQs (Spencer, 1995). The Quality Framework was introduced (March)⁶⁵, the vocational specifications were reissued in their revised format ready for implementation in September (May), the requirements for documentation and recording were reduced by NCVQ (July), the grading criteria were revised and made available to implemented immediately (September)⁶⁶, awarding bodies were forced to work together on test production in order to standardise levels and requirements, three alternative forms of external assessment were to be piloted, employer guidelines were produced to increase awareness of, and promote GNVQs to industry, further support and exemplar materials became available and there were further changes to the arrangements for assessment (September). The new specifications contained greater definition of evidence requirements and an increasing emphasis on practical activities, work experience and industry links, amplification, guidance and glossaries, and sign-posting of key skill links. The grading criteria had more specific requirements on calculating the amount of evidence required for grading claims for final certification (a third of evidence). However, the dates of publication for these changes illustrate that there had been little improvement since the hurried introduction in 1992/93. Staff were still left struggling with late information and had to implement changes at relatively short notice.

Published in March 1995 (NCVQ, BTEC, City & Guilds, RSAEB)⁶⁷ the Quality Framework represented an authoritative resolution to some of the emerging problems and issues and provided quality indicators for designing and running GNVQ programmes. The Framework was initially

⁶⁵ Up until 1995 there was no code of practice for GNVQs and they were subject to the Common Accord a set of criteria which determined the national requirements for the management and assessment of NVQs.

⁶⁶ Grading was now divided into two aspects, Process themes (Planning and Monitoring, Information Seeking and Handling and Evaluation) and Quality of Outcomes.

⁶⁷ Several other interested parties also had input into the Quality Framework (DfE, ED, FEFC) and openly promoted the use of the document.

divided into two parts A and B⁶⁸. Part A, was for senior managers and contained the quality indicators. Part B, was for staff responsible for the direct management, delivery and resourcing of the programmes⁶⁹, and contained further guidance on the design, delivery, interpretation, application and quality assurance of the programmes. There were examples of good practice drawing on the work of current centres as a source of reference. Initially, this document had no formal status but was soon promoted as containing the criteria that must be met by all centres. It was ultimately used to judge the appropriateness and quality of all GNVQ programmes offered in centres irrespective of the awarding body, type or size of centre, levels or vocational areas offered. The Framework provided a tool for auditing current provision in existing centres, and for new centres seeking approval. To aid development, centres were encouraged to write Quality Development Plans (QDPs)⁷⁰. The quality indicators in Part A were divided into five aspects, management and quality assurance, course policy, resources, course design and delivery, assessment and internal verification. Each aspect was then broken down into a main activity which in turn was sub-divided into individual indicators and appeared as detailed as the specifications themselves. Aspects were not equally weighted or covered to the same extent. Part B repeated the quality indicators adding guidance notes, definitions and examples of good practice but few actual requirements. For example, experience suggested that delivery time for programmes should be fifteen to twenty hours, but it could be less. This kind of ambiguous statement included in a document that reflected the complex structure and language of GNVQ did little to persuade the critics that things were about to improve.

Unfortunately, these latest changes were seen as being piecemeal and GNVQ continued to be overrun with unwieldy, inefficient and ineffective systems. In 1995 the Capey review (Capey, 1995) made a further nineteen recommendations for changes to GNVQs. These focused on four themes urging NCVQ and awarding bodies to address the manageability of assessment (actual assessment and recording needed to be simplified), key skills, grading and external tests. Even though these areas had

⁶⁸ A third document, GNVQ Centre Approval, Common criteria for the initial approval of GNVQ centres and courses, was published in 1996 (NCVQ et al, 1996).

⁶⁹ The Centre Co-ordinator, Programme Co-ordinator(s), Team Leaders, Internal Verifiers and Assessors.

⁷⁰ No actual time periods were specified for development plans. Implementation and enforcement of deadlines was left to individual awarding bodies.

already received much criticism, review and development there were clearly further issues to resolve. Capey did note that GNVQs had many strengths including the specified outcomes, unit based structure, emphasis on active learning and key skills. Higher level GNVQs were still being promoted even though there were considerable ongoing problems with the first three levels⁷¹. Despite the serious problems with post-16 GNVQ provision, the Part One pilot was launched in 1995. The introduction of Part One increased the need for better quality guidance for 14 - 19 year olds. This extended route was part of a general move towards a blurring of the division of education at sixteen years of age. The introduction of Part One signalled a change in control over GNVQ with the DfEE and SCAA becoming actively involved in the development of delivery and assessment models during what was a period of great criticism. However, the government were keen to be seen to be acting on concerns with post-16 GNVQ and called for tighter checks on standards to ensure that Part One had parity with GCSE (Nash, 1994c). Many lessons had been learnt from the hurried introduction of the full qualification post-16 and it was intended that the Part One pilot would last at least two years, possibly three.

The first three years of GNVQ were characterised by ongoing change and discontent. Some aspects of GNVQ were changed several times without the main issues ever being resolved. Meanwhile GNVQ was allowed to grow and pilots continued to be introduced. It is not surprising that variations within and between centres persisted as they struggled at their different stages of development and understanding to implement one change after another to specifications, assessment methods and requirements, systems and procedures.

Conclusions

Students were attracted to GNVQs by their general nature, the lack of reference to specific jobs and the broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding but ongoing problems received far greater

⁷¹ Plans were still in place for there were to be levels four and five available which would be equivalent to Higher National Diplomas and Degrees.

media coverage (Maxwell, 1994a and 1994b). Problems encountered by centres were largely related to finance, resources, late information and the design of the specifications (Hyland and Weller, 1994). GNVQ did not so much present an institutional approach to change (Dearing, 1993; Lowham and Bowner, 1995) as require one for successful introduction⁷². The problems resulting from short timescales for implementation and constant changes were exacerbated by the fact that GNVQ was trying to respond to multiple agendas, not just for the government but for individual centres and students. The constant and ongoing changes to specifications (including interpretations) and assessment requirements added to the atmosphere of discontent. The complex design and assessment requirements and lack of guidance resulted in variable provision which in turn contributed to variable standards.

The design of GNVQs has proved to be the source of many problems, contributing to variations in interpretation and the implementation of standards. The influence of the competence based theories that underpinned NVQs (Hyland, 1994c) resulted in the fragmentation of learning in the modularisation of GNVQs. Although GNVQs avoided the heavy reliance on performance outcomes (favoured by NVQs and much criticised by Hyland, 1993), the initial design of the evidence indicators left staff wondering what exactly was required. The jargon of GNVQ remained a key issue for centres and had a detrimental affect on the assessment process (Hyland and Weller, 1994).

There was no evidence to suggest that GNVQs were replacing academic courses other than some GCSE resit programmes (FEU, 1993 and 1994b). This was particularly evident in Sixth Form Colleges. The displacement or replacement of previous qualifications varied according to vocational areas. There was evidence that GNVQs were replacing BTEC First and National programmes and the recently introduced DVE. This was partly due to the common features between the qualifications (FEU, 1993 and 1994b) but mainly a result of the government announcement that GNVQs would replace these qualifications. There was little evidence to support Jessup's view (1994), that many Advanced level GNVQ students were literally turning their back on A levels. The reality was that A

⁷² Successful in terms of meeting NCVQ and awarding body requirements.

level remained the most popular course at Advanced level.

Establishing national recognition for GNVQs was not helped by changes in names, the lack of clarity regarding the real nature of GNVQs, (it was still unclear whether it was good general education, vocational education or broad preparation for employment or higher education), a lack of identification of the target audience and varying entry requirements (which were frequently linked to issues relating to competition). Differing recruitment criteria and entry requirements detracted from the perception of GNVQ as a genuine alternative to academic qualifications. On the positive side GNVQs have contributed to the creation of a single national system for vocational qualifications. They enabled centres to better cater for student needs (enabling a wider ability range to participate post-16), provided broad vocational areas for study and to some extent, provided an alternative route to higher education. It is unclear whether they provided broad preparation for work or really developed relevant knowledge and work skills as few students appeared to be going directly into related occupations. GNVQs failed to achieve a number of aims of the 1991 White Paper. Levels of attainment and numbers achieving higher levels had not risen. Instead there had been displacement of qualifications (FEU, 1994b; Spours, 1995). The academic/vocational divide had not been bridged nor parity of esteem achieved. Most courses avoided using practical, vocational evidence and/or work experience. There was no relationship between GNVQs and NVQs other than in their design⁷³. As with previous pre-vocational qualifications, GNVQs tried to be 'all things to all men'.

Background to the research

The early period of the introduction of GNVQs can be viewed as a 'success story' in terms of the numbers of centres offering the qualification and the number of students enrolled on courses leading to the qualification. However, research and evaluation reports on this period highlighted a wide range of problems. The problems were complex but central were those experienced by centres implementing the programmes (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994; FEU, 1994a and b). A number of research

⁷³ Latterly, this was eroded by the changes implemented.

and agency reports pointed to differences between centres in the problems experienced and some thought, that because of their culture and previous experience, FE Colleges were experiencing fewer problems and that the main problems were to be found in schools which had little previous experience of delivering vocational and pre-vocational courses (Ecclestone, 2000). In addition, there were reported differences between vocational areas (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994) and target groups for the qualification were still unclear (FEU, 1994b). However, previous research had not looked in detail at implementation and provision at institutional level and therefore had not entirely clarified the specific nature of the problems, whether the different phases of the programmes were affected to a greater or lesser extent, the exact nature of how the programmes were being implemented and how far this met requirements and good practice. Moreover it had not focused on whether there were varying problems associated with the different awarding bodies.

The current research was therefore designed to address these questions and to explore the institutional view of the process of implementation with a particular focus on issues of implementation across centres, phases of the programmes, types of institution, different awarding bodies, different vocational areas, previous vocational and GNVQ experience, and the lead-in time allowed prior to the introduction of the programmes. The intention was that the research would contribute to answering the question of whether the hurried introduction of GNVQs was the cause of many of the ongoing problems or whether there were more fundamental issues which needed resolving. It would also help in answering the question why, if the problems were so immense, did centres continue to seek approval to offer GNVQs and student numbers continue to grow. Establishing profiles of the centres would allow an exploration of their culture and experience. By focusing on the methods for implementation, the activities and resources of the programmes and how centres used these to respond to the challenges of GNVQ (such as increasing student control) the intention was to establish if there were any emerging models.

This research was viewed as a timely opportunity to examine the introduction and implementation of the first national general vocational qualification. The roots of GNVQ were in central policy and there

is debate on its origins (Ecclestone, 2000 p.539) but government agencies appeared unable to get to grips with what was happening at institutional level and why it occurred. The research would identify the gaps, if any, between the reality of implementation and the rhetoric of GNVQ and offer explanations of why the problems were being experienced.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research texts (for example, Powney and Watts 1987) have noted the dangers of, and influence from, researchers bringing their own history and experience to the research process. In deciding on an appropriate research strategy it was important that the researcher took into account her prior and continuing experience. The researcher had experience of both National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) working as a tutor, assessor, internal verifier, centre manager, external verifier and training consultant. This experience influenced the researcher's knowledge of the qualification.

The researcher decided that her previous experience could be advantageous in the preliminary research and she would be able to access a number of 'co-operative' centres relatively quickly, using these centres to explore methods of collecting data, find sources of relevant information in centres and collect preliminary data to inform the main research. The preliminary research had to be relatively short to be of use to the researcher and therefore, to reduce the time spent on this phase and reduce the bulk of information, the decision was taken to focus on the induction process. By the end of the preliminary research phase (May 1995) the researcher had decided to develop the main research to include all phases of the programmes as it became clear from the preliminary research that there was scope to explore the whole programme structure in order to further investigate emerging differences. At this stage it was necessary to consider the size, scope and method for the main research. It was obvious that the researcher could not study everything or everyone. The selection of who, what, where, when and why all placed limits on the conclusions that could be drawn from the research and the level of confidence in these conclusions. In order to reach a decision the researcher weighed the positive and negative aspects of conducting a large scale postal survey which gave broad coverage

against those of a close up study of a limited number of GNVQ centres, which would have been similar to the preliminary research (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

The decision making process

Consideration	Close up study of a limited number of centres	Large scale survey
Method	Interviews	Questionnaire - postal survey
Resources	Interviewer(s)	Clerical
Costs	Interviewer(s), clerical	Clerical, postage, printing
Implications for centres	Preparation and organisation time plus half to a whole day for the interview process but could be longer	20 - 30 minutes
The collection of the data	Highly dependent on the availability/accessibility of staff	Could be completed in the respondents own time
Personalisation	Possible - potential for researchers background to influence the data collection process	Limited, little potential for the researchers background to influence the data collection beyond the design stage
Potential to probe	Possible	Very limited
Data handling	Substantial coding with serious time implications	More limited coding
Response rate and reliability	Good	Potential to be poor in the current GNVQ climate
Effects of sample size	Unrealistic to draw conclusions regarding the number of sub-groups and factors to be included	Potential to ensure a reasonable size sample and therefore reduce error and increase confidence in conclusions
Sources of error	Interviews, the instrument, coding, the sample	The instrument, the sample
Questions to define the study	May be influenced by the responses and stray from the questions	Set for all respondents although they may omit some questions

As reports already indicated that there was considerable variation amongst centres, awarding bodies and vocational areas, it became obvious that a large sample would be required. A small sample using a close up study of a limited number of centres would have made it unrealistic to generalise about the implementation of GNVQs at institutional level or to have confidence in the conclusions¹. The large scale survey would allow a number of sub-groups (such as types of institution or centre, awarding bodies, vocational areas and experience) to be compared. The larger sample would reduce the level of error and allow the researcher to draw significant conclusions regarding the implementation of

¹ ‘The larger the sample the lower the likely error in generalizing’ (Robson, 1993 p136).

GNVQs and the issues identified in Chapter Two. By the end of May 1995 it had been decided that a postal survey could have a clear purpose and focus, and target a specific population whilst making the best use of the available resources including time and cost.

The research process

The research process was divided into three phases comprising preliminary research, pilot research and the main research. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the phases, the research activities, their purpose, time scale, sample size and centre types.

Table 3.2
Overview of the research process

Phase of research	Activity	Purpose	Time scale	Sample size	Centre types
Preliminary	Interview centre managers, staff and, where possible, students to gather information on vocational qualifications	Increase knowledge, inform direction of the research, consider and test the feasibility of gathering sensitive information, inform the design of the questionnaire	October 1994 - April 1995	21 centres	Private training providers, FE Colleges, Schools and Sixth Form Colleges
Pilot	Design and issue questionnaire to GNVQ centres	Test and evaluate the use of the questionnaire	June 1995 - August 1995	12 centres	FE Colleges, Schools and Sixth Form Colleges
Main	Postal survey of GNVQ centres using the questionnaire	Gather data for the main research	September - October 1995 Final returns by January - February 1996	584 centres	Random sample of 1 in 4 from the NCVQ list of approved centres (excluding training providers)

The preliminary research

The preliminary research was conducted in order to inform the direction of the main research by gathering information from a range of different GNVQ and NVQ centres. It also presented an opportunity to explore and practise different methods of gathering information, establish the feasibility of gathering sensitive information and begin to formulate the questionnaire design. As

previously noted, this phase of the research focused primarily on the induction process. Twenty GNVQ centres and three training providers were approached to participate in this phase. They were selected to reflect diversity of provision, a range of vocational qualifications and on the basis of estimates of their willingness to participate. The training providers and some of the GNVQ centres were personally known to the researcher and others were found through colleagues². The initial contact was made by telephone with a named manager and explanations were given as to the nature of the research and assurances on confidentiality and anonymity³. Eventually eighteen of the centres plus three training providers, all based in London and the South East of England, participated in this phase of the research. These centres varied in type, the programmes offered, extent of GNVQ and other vocational experience and awarding body approval (Appendix 3.1 and 3.2).

During this phase (October 1994 to April 1995), information was collected by reviewing centre documents and conducting telephone and face-to-face interviews with centre staff. Most centres were visited for half a day. Members of the senior management team and a selection of centre staff were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and based around two forms which drew on the researcher's knowledge as an external verifier. Following Robson's (1993) advice the interviews were ordered with the introduction allowing for the collection of background information, a central section containing the main questions with the final section drawing the interview to a conclusion. In the course of undertaking the interviews, the question order was deliberately varied to follow the structures developed by the interviewee's responses. Interviews became shorter during this phase as interviewing skills were developed. One interview was tape-recorded but there were problems in transcription. The time required for transcribing the tape was difficult to justify in terms of the value of the information provided. It was also difficult to recap the main points of information gathered during the interview or return to a topic to clarify a response.

² These were lecturers and/or external verifiers working in vocational qualifications.

³ This contact invariably led to an introduction to the centre co-ordinator/manager.

The centres provided basic information regarding their background (such as their previous experience and awarding body approval), entry requirements, the programmes offered, the use of inductions and provision of vocational qualifications (GNVQs and NVQs). The process was helpful in identifying what level of information respondents had ready access to, who was likely to be able to provide specific information, what they were likely to divulge to an outside observer and what they felt was relevant. The interviews with the training providers were used to develop an understanding of the purposes of induction and an awareness of variations in content and style between the different types of centre and how NVQ experience may affect the provision of other vocational qualifications.

In this preliminary research phase, it became clear that prior relationships with some of the centres affected the quality of the information gathered and the time required for the research. In a number of cases, prior knowledge of the centre indicated what information would be available and ways of accessing it. However, in some centres, it was difficult to pursue particular information which the researcher knew to be sensitive, for example, information on retention and completion rates for GNVQs and NVQs. Senior staff, either centre managers or centre co-ordinators had greater access to information and were better informed about the history of the centre and general centre practice compared to programme co-ordinators, tutors or assessors. The latter had a very limited knowledge of details that informed the creation of the centre profile (for example, the history of the centre). This was an important finding that informed the decision to address the main research questionnaire to the GNVQ centre co-ordinator. Centres with which the researcher was familiar were more prepared to provide feedback on the research process including the structure and the content of the interviews. The structure and content of the forms used for collecting the information were found to be suitable for consideration for the development of the questionnaire. This, along with the length of the time it took to organise, conduct, document and analyse the data from the interviews confirmed that a questionnaire would be the most appropriate research instrument to access a range of centres. This research was particularly helpful in extending the researcher's knowledge of the range of reasons given for the introduction of vocational qualifications, the different approval status of the awarding bodies (own centre approval, franchise or consortium agreements), the extent of multiple approvals (a

number of centres offered programmes with more than one awarding body), the number of roles undertaken by staff in centres offering vocational qualifications and the different types of induction process. It also indicated that, although training providers were included on the GNVQ centre list as approved centres, it was unlikely that they would have any GNVQ provision (Appendix 3.2).

Designing the pilot questionnaire

Undertaking the preliminary research provided the opportunity to develop informed and relevant questions for the main research. The structure of the questionnaire for the main research would enable the collection of data on the centres (their type, experience, other background information and the nature of the courses they offered) and on the phases of GNVQ programmes (the introduction to the centre, the staff and student inductions, the delivery and exit). In drafting the questionnaire use was made of the Quality Framework which was introduced in March 1995 (NCVQ et al, 1995). The framework consisted of quality indicators that focused on the design, delivery and quality assurance of GNVQ programmes.

At the time of the research, the implementation of the Quality Framework was a 'grey area' with none of the three awarding bodies using all of the quality indicators as a framework for reporting on or measuring centre performance. Moreover, the researcher had little evidence from her own experience or from evidence collected during the preliminary research that the Quality Framework was being implemented in centres. The intention was to establish how closely practice in centres related to the Quality Framework by including specific questions in the questionnaire. Appendix 3.3 contains a detailed description of the Quality Framework and identifies key questions designed to gather information on these aspects.

The researcher was conscious of the central role that GNVQs played in her working life and the danger that

‘-- because questionnaires are usually written by educated persons who have special interest in and understanding of the topic of their inquiry, and because these people usually consult with other educated and concerned people, it is much more common for questionnaires to be overwritten, overcomplicated, and too demanding of the respondent than they are to be simpleminded, superficial and not demanding enough.’ (Sheatsley, 1983 p.200 quoted in Converse and Presser 1986 p.10).

Whilst the preliminary research had focused on induction the researcher decided to expand the main research to include the delivery and assessment, and exit phases of the programmes in order to gain an understanding of complete programmes offered by centres. Investigating the different phases of the programmes had the potential to allow a more extensive investigation of the extent of any differences or influencing factors. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions with a tick box format as respondents find this style of questionnaire easier to complete (Robson 1993). It was felt that GNVQ staff were under considerable pressure and the appearance that the form was easy to complete would encourage them to complete and return the questionnaire. Open-ended questions were also kept to a minimum in order to keep the analysis more manageable.

The final draft of the pilot questionnaire contained a lengthy first section (almost one half of the questionnaire) asking for background information which the preliminary research indicated would be readily available to the respondents. These questions gathered information on the roles of the respondent, the type of awarding body approval and GNVQ experience, type of centre, the range of courses offered (non-GNVQ courses and the vocational areas and levels of GNVQ), previous vocational experience, the time between taking the decision to offer GNVQs and the admission of the first students (the lead-in time), the entry requirements used for the different levels, what other courses were offered in conjunction with GNVQs, how the introduction was managed (including staff induction) and why GNVQs were introduced. This data was required to establish if there were any basic differences between centres. The status of the centre co-ordinator and internal verifier was clearly seen as being important being specifically mentioned in the Quality Framework and checked

by the awarding bodies as part of the approval and external verification process. Previous research had already established that most centres offered a limited range of vocational areas and levels and that this was linked to specific types of centre (FEU, 1994b). The researcher wanted to establish if there were any changes to provision and if these differences had a specific cause. The researcher concluded that the previous experience of centres was potentially very important. GNVQs used a number of aspects and approaches developed in previous qualifications (some of which were still offered), they created similar resource and staff training needs and had short planning timescales when initially introduced. Sufficient lead-in time was required in order for staff to familiarise themselves with GNVQs, their roles and the specifications. There had been a number of comments regarding the hurried introduction of GNVQs and the researcher was interested in exploring any potential effects of lead-in time or whether subsequently, centres were allowing a longer preparation period. Brief information was also collected on the staff induction. Centres were asked whether the entry requirements for GNVQs were the same for all vocational areas at the same level and to note their entry requirements. The Quality Framework required centres to specify target groups, develop a course policy and use an appropriate range of evidence for entry to programmes. By looking more closely at entry requirements the researcher hoped to identify the target groups for the three levels. The questionnaire gathered information on whether GNVQs, ultimately designed to be flexible, were being offered in conjunction with other courses or qualifications. Finally, respondents were asked to state why GNVQs had been introduced. The media and previous research had emphasised that few centres had introduced GNVQs because they were seen as a good qualification (Crequer, 1994a; MacLeod, 1994; Nash, 1994g; FEU, 1994b). The respondents were not required to make any judgements and the information was non-contentious.

The second section of the questionnaire was based entirely on the student induction phase of programmes and was more complex with more questions requiring respondents to evaluate their programmes in terms of how easily they achieved the introduction of specific aspects. The questions explored the timing, duration, management (formality, style, groupings) and content of the induction and were based on the findings from the preliminary research, the induction requirements

recommended by awarding bodies and other agencies, the Quality Framework and good practice identified in previous reports and research. Centres were asked to describe their induction in detail including the types of inductions offered and when students were admitted to courses. Respondents were also asked to complete a list of activities (constructed in random order) by recording how likely these were to be included in their induction and to indicate how easy or difficult it was to achieve the introduction of these activities. Some of these aspects were GNVQ specific and others non-GNVQ but generally regarded as part of the induction process. This section required the most consideration by respondents.

The final two sections focused on the delivery and assessment of the programmes, and the exit phase and were smaller and less complex. The third section consisted of questions on the delivery and assessment processes, the levels of integration used and required respondents to note how closely a description matched their practice. Centres were also asked to note the influences on the optional units they offered. Influences on optional units had not previously been explored and the researcher was interested in gathering this information. Centres were asked to complete a list (constructed in random order) that included activities and approaches that could be included in this phase and to record how high a priority they were. This list was largely based on the Quality Framework, awarding body requirements and good practice identified in previous reports. A number of the activities from the induction phase (for example, APL and diagnostic assessment) were also included to see if there was any overlap in the timing of how these were offered in the programmes.

The questions on the exit phase focused on the final activities that were expected to be offered in programmes and also explored how students accessed a range of advice and guidance. Again, respondents had to complete a list of activities noting how highly they featured in this phase. Whilst much had been written about exit routes to higher education, there was little information on the types of advice and guidance that students received or whether they had access to a range of exit routes. These questions were largely influenced by the Quality Framework.

The pilot research

The pilot research was conducted in order to gain feedback on the design of the questionnaire from current practitioners. This included its relevance and purpose, to check that all the questions and instructions were clear and to establish how feasible it was to expect the questionnaire to be completed and returned, and the importance of targeting specific members of staff. The methods used were a postal survey and telephone or face-to-face interviews to review the questionnaire with a limited number of centres (June 1995 to August 1995). Twelve GNVQ centres were approached to participate in this phase. They were selected using the criteria of willingness to participate, previous experience of GNVQs, range of geographical areas, range of centre types (FE Colleges, Schools and Sixth Form Colleges) and predicted reliability in completing and returning the forms. Some of the centres from the preliminary research phase agreed to take part in the piloting of the questionnaire. It should be noted that in between the two phases of the research, some of the centres altered their entry requirements for GNVQ programmes, the number of programmes they offered and the target cohort for the qualification. The majority of pilot questionnaires were completed by the centre co-ordinators, who were specifically targeted as the person most likely to have access to the information required to complete the questionnaire (confirmed by the findings of the preliminary research). In one centre, in addition to the centre co-ordinator, questionnaires were deliberately given to programme co-ordinators, internal verifiers and assessors in order to try to ascertain the reliability of the data collected.

Most of the questionnaires were returned within the deadline. Staff had been asked to write comments against questions to indicate any reasons for not answering any questions they omitted, any questions they identified as inappropriate, questions that did not make sense, any areas of GNVQ that they would have expected to appear on the questionnaire but had been omitted and any other feedback or points that they felt would be useful in developing the research. They were also asked to note how long it took to complete the questionnaire. The feedback from the pilot was positive with the majority of staff taking 20 to 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Staff noted that the instructions were

clear and unambiguous and there were no indications that other areas should have been included or that alterations should be made to any of the existing questions. Responses to the questions did however indicate that when the respondent was not the centre co-ordinator, there were problems in providing full information, particularly on the previous vocational experience of the centre and as to whether practice was uniform across a centre and all the vocational areas offered. A small number of respondents commented that it was difficult to answer some of the questions because of the constantly changing nature of GNVQs. For example, there were ongoing changes to the grading criteria and the provision of key skills evidence. However, the questionnaire proved to be an appropriate tool for gathering the research data.

The main research

The main research phase involved a postal survey. Whilst writers have often avoided a definition of a survey, it commonly refers to the collection of standardised information from a specific population, or some sample from one, usually but not necessarily, by means of a questionnaire or interview. Bryman (1989 p.104) has attempted a formal definition:

‘--- survey research entails the collection of data ---- on a number of units and usually at a single juncture in time, with a view to collecting systematically a body of quantifiable data in respect of a number of variables which are then examined to discern patterns of association.’

In preparing to undertake the main research, a major problem was encountered in obtaining a public list of all registered GNVQ centres. This list was produced by NCVQ but obtaining it took three months of constant phone calls and written requests. The list contained a number of types of centres that had not been anticipated, including Adult Education Institutions, Higher Education Institutions and Prisons. The decision was taken not to include this unanticipated group in the sampling frame. The pilot research had indicated that these other types of centres would be unlikely to be running programmes and conversations with colleagues confirmed this information. There were also problems

with some centres being listed twice when names had been entered slightly differently and these had to be removed. Where names and addresses of centres were incomplete or illegible, centres were left on the list with these problems to be resolved if they were selected. After these adjustments the final list of approved centres on the NCVQ list was 2,336 (from an original total of 2377).

Systematic sampling was used with a random sample of one in four being chosen, giving a total of 584 centres. The decision to sample so many centres was taken because there were fears about the response rate. At the time of the distribution of the questionnaire there had been another wave of adverse publicity for GNVQs, highlighting in particular anxieties about the quality of the programmes and the high drop-out and low completion rates. There was concern that staff, feeling battered and defensive about GNVQ, would not respond positively to another request for information, particularly as there were other research projects seeking information.

Deciding on the timing of the questionnaire was difficult as realistically there was no 'good' time to approach GNVQ staff. Drawing on previous experience it was decided that the first three weeks in October 1995 was the best time to distribute the questionnaires, particularly as information would then be available on all phases of the programme. To try to ensure a good response rate the questionnaire was accompanied by a letter on good quality, headed University note paper signed by the researcher and a tutor and a prepaid return envelope was included. Each centre was allocated a reference number which related to their geographical area and the number they were in the sample. Each address label and questionnaire bore this reference number enabling tracking of the response and non-response from institutions. This also created the potential to explore regional variations when the data was analysed. The letters were addressed to the GNVQ centre co-ordinator as the person who would have access to the information to complete the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire and letter are contained in Appendix 3.4 and 3.5.

The response rate was better than feared and by the beginning of December 1995, 49 per cent had returned questionnaires. A small number of questionnaires (Table 3.4) were returned by centres

noting that either the centre no longer existed or they did not offer GNVQs. This had the effect of reducing the overall size of the sample. A second mailing was sent out in January 1996 including a letter (Appendix 3.6) and encouraging those who had mislaid their questionnaire to telephone for another. This resulted in another 4 per cent being returned. The final response rate of 53 per cent compared well with Hyland and Weller's extremely high rate of response (Hyland and Weller, 1994). Table 3.3 compares this research with a number of other research projects on the development of GNVQs. Most previous research had looked specifically at either Schools or FE Colleges. This was the first large scale research conducted at institutional level that would look in-depth across a range of institutions, establish the profiles of centres and examine the different phases of the programmes and the approaches used. It would allow direct comparisons between different types of institutions, awarding bodies and centres with different backgrounds and experience.

Table 3.3

Comparison of GNVQ research projects

Research project	Scope of the research	Size of the sample
This research	FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Specialist Colleges and Schools Questionnaire, one in four random sample of all centres. All phases of the programmes and centre profiles.	564 centres with 299 responding
A Year in GNVQ 1992/93 (ED, 1993)	Schools. Case studies from the pilot phase.	25 of 107 Schools
Implementing GNVQs in Post-16 Education (Hyland and Weller, 1994)	Post-16 FEFC funded institutions Questionnaire sent to NVQ/GNVQ co-ordinators. A broad outline of the take-up and early implementation.	465 centres with 316 responding
Introducing GNVQs into Schools and Colleges (ED, 1992)	Schools and Colleges with a geographical spread who introduced GNVQ in September 1992. Questionnaires. The early assessment of the impact and implementation.	26 centres
A Report of the Further Education Unit's Evaluation of GNVQs (FEU, 1993)	FE and Sixth Form Colleges. Questionnaires and visits. Evaluation of the introduction.	52 centres
GNVQs for the Built Environment (Sims, 1994)	Centres offering this vocational area A geographical spread of Colleges with different industrial profiles. Visits, interviews and questionnaires. Models of, and approaches to, GNVQ.	20 pilot centres
General National Vocational Qualifications in the Further Education Sector (FEFC, 1994)	FE Colleges. Inspection visits. Organisation, management and delivery of the programmes.	114 centres (25 per cent of the further education sector)
GNVQs in Schools 1993/4 (Ofsted, 1994)	Schools. Visits. Standards and factors influencing standards.	170 including 39 of those who took part in the 1992 pilot
GNVQs 1993 - 94 A National Survey Report (FEU, 1994b). The interim report	Schools, Sixth Form and FE Colleges. Questionnaires and site visits. Enrolment and delivery patterns.	156 centres comprising 51 FE Colleges, 16 Sixth Form Colleges, 86 Schools and 3 specialist institutions

Very few adverse comments were received from the centres. Letters attached to the returned questionnaires and notes on the questionnaires often contained useful insights into the development of centres and the attitudes of staff. After all the efforts to emphasise the confidentiality of the centres and respondents, the questionnaires were often signed by the respondent and full contact details were often provided for replies or further information.

Analysis of the data

This stage proved to be one of the most problematic of the research. The questionnaire was coded in order to enter the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Limited access to SPSS created the need to enter the data into a spreadsheet. The first two runs for frequencies highlighted some problems in the coding of questions and errors in the data that had been entered. Checking for these errors and ensuring the data entered was accurate was a lengthy process which took several weeks.

It was clear from the initial analysis that specific aspects of the data could be more effectively examined by creating additional variables based on the responses. The reasons centres introduced GNVQs were grouped after the collection of the data. The entry criteria used by centres were analysed using a combination of the DfEE requirements and then grouping other criteria according to the responses (for example, the use of National Curriculum levels). The researcher decided that a variable showing GNVQ approval experience not only in terms of length but that distinguished between centres with their own approval experience and those with franchise or consortium experience would allow greater exploration of any potential differences. Previous vocational experience proved to be a complex aspect of centre profiles. In order to make analysis easier a points score for the total experience was created by allocating one point for each year and type of previous experience creating an overall total.

No one removed the coding from the questionnaire and the analysis of the returns revealed that there were no major variations in the response rates from different geographical areas (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Response by geographical area

Region	No. mailed	No. responses	% return
West	65	33	50.8
Wales	50	26	52.0
Midlands	90	47	52.2
North	138	69	50.0
East	42	23	54.8
South	177	89	50.3
Northern Ireland	21	12	57.1
Overseas	1	0	0.0
Centres not running GNVQ	- 20	0	0.0
Sub-total	584 ⁴	299	53.0
Total	564	299	53.0

Selecting the vocational area for the response

Centres were asked to state whether all their vocational areas followed a similar pattern for delivery. If the pattern varied they were asked to select one vocational area on which to base the responses to the remainder of the questionnaire (Table 3.5). Nearly half the centres indicated that their programmes followed a similar pattern for delivery. In other centres the selection of the vocational area followed the same pattern of popularity as vocational areas offered in centres. Business was selected for the focus of the remainder of the questionnaire by 24.7 per cent of respondents.

Construction and the Built Environment, Retail and Distribution and Management Studies were not selected. It was highly likely that GNVQ Business was introduced in the early stages of centre approval and this affected the number of respondents selecting this area. This may have reflected that, as centre co-ordinators, respondents had been involved in the initial stages of implementing GNVQ in their centres. This also reflected the level of experience of the people replying to the questionnaire.

⁴ Minus adjustment of 20 for centres not running.

Table 3.5

Selection of a vocational area by the respondents

Vocational area	Selection	
	No.	%
Business	74	24.7
Health and Social Care	43	14.4
Leisure and Tourism	20	6.7
Art and Design	4	1.3
Science	3	1.0
Engineering	2	0.7
Hospitality and Catering	2	0.7
Information Technology	1	0.3
Manufacturing	1	0.3
Media and Communication	1	0.3
No selection	148	49.6
Total	299	100.0

Respondents were asked to choose from a range of reasons for selecting the vocational area. Table 3.6 shows that most respondents selected the area with which they were most familiar (in a number of cases this was also offered at more than one level), or one that had the most experienced staff or was the oldest vocational area.

Table 3.6

Reasons for selecting the vocational area

Reason	Response	
	No.	%
Most familiar to you	100	28.9
Most experienced staff	58	16.8
Oldest	45	13.0
Operates at all levels	42	12.1
Most successful	33	9.5
Other reason	27	7.9
Most information available	24	6.9
Operates at one level	10	2.9
Newest	7	2.0
Total	346	100.0

More than half of the respondents gave more than one reason for their selection (Table 3.7). A vocational area was rarely selected solely because it was the oldest. This answer was frequently

grouped with the response that this GNVQ area had the most experienced staff and/or was most familiar to the respondent.

Table 3.7

Summary of multiple reasons for selection of the vocational area

Number of reasons	Selection	
	No.	%
One	55	18.4
Two	37	12.4
Three	23	7.7
Four	21	7.0
Five	10	3.3
Six	2	0.7
No response	151	50.5
Total	299	100.0

Conclusions

The response rate was comparable with other research into GNVQs and indicated that, as in the pilot phase, respondents found it easy to complete the questionnaire. The sample was representative of all geographical areas and selection of the vocational area reflected the popularity of the vocational areas⁵. On the whole, the respondents were very experienced members of the GNVQ team. This was confirmed by the reasons respondents gave for selecting the vocational area.

Although previous research indicated there were differences between centres, awarding bodies and vocational areas it had not identified any specific details. This data would allow the researcher to explore the true nature of any differences via a detailed examination of implementation at institutional level, establish if there were any emerging models of provision and reflect on specific aspects of provision. This included any effects on provision from the short timescales for introducing GNVQs, how centres themselves responded to the multiple agendas of GNVQ, any influences from the complex design and assessment requirements, whether GNVQs were replacing academic courses and

⁵ Half of the respondents did not select a specific vocational area as their programmes all followed a similar pattern for induction, delivery and exit.

whether centres were continuing to use different entry requirements. The results would provide profiles of the centres offering GNVQs, how the introduction of GNVQs was managed, the GNVQ curriculum and the assessment process.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS - A PROFILE OF PROVISION

Introduction

In this chapter data from the survey is used to examine the provision of GNVQs and how it had evolved by 1995. The nature of the institutions offering GNVQs, the vocational areas and levels offered, and the entry requirements for the programmes are described along with the reasons why GNVQs were introduced, awarding body approval, GNVQ experience, the previous vocational experience of centres, and how GNVQs were offered, including the range of qualifications offered by institutions and how these were combined with GNVQs, are also described.

Type of institutions offering GNVQs

The results presented in Table 4.1 confirm the findings of other studies (FEU, 1994b) with nearly three quarters of centres being Schools. However, it must be remembered that student numbers were lower in Schools compared to FE and Sixth Form Colleges (FEU, 1994b).

Table 4.1

Institutions that offered GNVQs

Type of centre	N	%
Schools	221	73.9
FE Colleges	40	13.3
Sixth Form Colleges	19	6.4
Other Institutions ¹	19	6.4
Total	299	100.0

The questionnaire sought to confirm the number of centres offering GNVQs pre-16. About a fifth of

¹ Although training providers were removed from the sample (see methodology) 'Other' centres includes Private Schools or Colleges, Specialist Colleges, CTCs, adult education, Higher Education Institutions and Tertiary Institutions.

the Schools noted that they offered GNVQ pre-16 as well as post-16 (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

How GNVQs were offered in Schools 14 - 19

How GNVQ is offered in Schools	N	%
Post-16 only	142	64.2
Pre and post-16	43	19.5
Unspecified	36	16.3
Total	221	100.0

Surprisingly, the number of centres offering GNVQ pre-16 was more than twice the number of Schools in the Part One Pilot. Whilst some of these may have been involved in the Part One Pilot² others must have been offering the post-16 model at Key Stage Four. Schools offering GNVQ outside the pilot were outside the control of the DfEE³.

Vocational areas offered

Previous studies had found that initially, there was considerable diversity in the GNVQs offered in centres (ED, 1992) whilst others found that some vocational areas were more popular than others (Hyland and Weller, 1994). Some people were concerned about the resulting limited choice for students (Hillier, 1995). At the time the data was collected a large number of vocational areas and levels had been introduced and were available to be offered by centres. Table 4.3 lists the vocational areas offered in terms of popularity⁴.

² The size of the September 1995 pilot was 151 schools comprised of 9 pilot centres in Northern Ireland, 27 in Wales and 115 in England (6 per cent of all centres). Only the three vocational areas of Business, Health and Social Care and Manufacturing were available (NCVQ 1995b).
³ The preliminary research supported the existence of such a group and general indications were that these schools had offered GNVQ pre-16 for two to three years.
⁴ On average, centres offered four vocational areas.

Table 4.3

Popularity of GNVQs offered in centres

Vocational area	N	%
Business	262	22.9
Health & Social Care	236	20.6
Leisure & Tourism	189	16.5
Art & Design	134	11.7
Science	81	7.1
Manufacturing	52	4.5
Information Technology	46	4.0
Engineering	39	3.4
Hospitality & Catering	35	3.1
Media, Communication and Production	29	2.6
Construction & the Built Environment	23	2.0
Management Studies	15	1.4
Retail & Distribution	2	0.2
Total	1143	100.0

The research confirmed that there was still a division in the provision of vocational areas. The vocational areas appeared to divide naturally into two groups, Major and Minor league GNVQs (Table 4.4). Major league GNVQs were those offered by most centres and at more than one level. Minor league GNVQs were offered in far fewer centres and at fewer levels.

Table 4.4

Major and Minor league GNVQs

Major League	Minor League
Business Health & Social Care Leisure and Tourism Art & Design	Science Manufacturing Information Technology Engineering Hospitality & Catering Construction Media Management Studies Retail and Distribution

The number of centres that offered Science was higher than anticipated⁵. There were indications that Science and Art and Design may ultimately develop similar levels of popularity leaving three Major

⁵ It was specifically its restricted selection as a Foundation level programme that reduced the likelihood of it being one of the most popular GNVQs.

league GNVQs (Business, Health and Social Care and Leisure and Tourism), a middle group (Science and Art and Design) and the Minor league GNVQs. Of the Minor league GNVQs Information Technology appeared the most likely to move to the middle group. The low figures for the provision of some of the vocational areas may have reflected the state of those industries⁶, or the need for specialist facilities, equipment and staff which required considerable investment on the part of the centre. The two groups of Major and Minor league will be used later in the research to analyse potential similarities and differences between vocational areas.

Levels offered

Previous research had shown that, in terms of the number of centres and students, Intermediate level was more popular than Advanced level (FEU, 1994b). Table 4.5 shows the levels of GNVQ offered by the centres.

Table 4.5

Levels offered		
Levels and combinations	N	%
Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced	122	40.8
Intermediate and Advanced	90	30.1
Intermediate only	41	13.7
Foundation and Intermediate	23	7.7
Advanced only	17	5.7
Foundation only	3	1.0
No response	3	1.0
Total	299	100.0

Over three quarters of centres offered two or three levels of GNVQ displacing the popularity of offering Intermediate level alone. A fifth of centres offered one level only resulting in no internal progression route within GNVQ for these students. Less than half of the centres offered all three

⁶ In 1995 the Construction industry was still in recession and this influenced the need for construction related courses. A number of FE Colleges had already reduced their facilities for these courses and others were in the process of closing construction departments or making further reductions in provision.

levels potentially restricting the placement of students on appropriate levels and the development of progression routes within centres.

Course entry

There were no national or mandatory entry requirements for access to GNVQs at any level, only recommendations (DfE, 1993a and b, and 1994) and entry requirements remained flexible. Initially, the recommendations stated that Foundation level students did not usually need any qualifications but this was later amended to two GCSEs at F to G (Glover, 1995), at Intermediate level students would need one or two GCSEs at grades A to D or a Foundation level GNVQ and at Advanced level students would usually need four or five GCSEs at grades A to C or an Intermediate level GNVQ. The Framework did not offer further clarification of specific entry requirements but noted that target groups needed greater clarification and that students should have access to appropriate courses designed to meet their needs and assure successful achievement. Irrespective of the level GNVQ entry criteria should have been primarily focused on the likelihood of success on a particular course, be neither too open nor too restrictive, and take into account a range of evidence, student aspirations and interests.

Advanced GNVQs were initially seen as suitable for those who did not take AS or A levels and entry requirements were lower for Advanced GNVQs compared to A levels. Target groups for Foundation and Intermediate were less clear (ED, 1992). The monitoring of entry requirements prior to this research showed that, in some respects, centres developed more specific requirements as they gained experience (ED, 1992; FEU, 1993). With the odd exception (FEU, 1993), entry requirements for GNVQs remained less stringent than for academic courses. This continued to make GNVQ a negative choice for a large number of students. The lack of Foundation level programmes coupled with a lack of suitable entry criteria for Intermediate was previously found to lead to inappropriate recruitment,

increasing the drop-out and failure rates (FEFC, 1994)⁷. Setting the correct entry criteria was clearly a problem that could affect assessment standards, retention and outcomes (ED, 1992 and 1994; Ofsted, 1994; FEU 1994b; Sutcliffe and Blackburn, 1995; Tomlinson, 1995).

Different entry requirements

Centres were asked to indicate if they had the same entry requirements at the same level irrespective of the vocational area offered. This research showed that most centres had standard entry requirements at each level for all GNVQ programmes (Table 4.6). Only a small number of respondents did not have standard entry criteria for all vocational areas.

Table 4.6

The use of consistent entry requirements

Entry requirements	N	%
Requirements are the same for all vocational areas at the same level	227	75.9
Entry requirements differ between vocational areas at the same level	37	12.4
No response	35	11.7
Total	299	100.0

Specific entry requirements

The research sought to establish what entry requirements were used at different levels and how these compared to the recommended requirements (DfE, 1994). Some centres specified more than one answer for entry requirements to programmes (for example, at Advanced level 5 GCSEs at A to C plus an interview). In this instance the higher requirement was taken⁸. Some centres noted that

⁷ These problems were more apparent in some vocational areas, for example, Leisure and Tourism (FEFC, 1994).
⁸ In practice the higher level may not have been applied. Anecdotal information indicated that centres used a variety of requirements that were not always applied.

GCSEs were required but failed to specify the number or grades required for entry. It was noticeable that the incidence of this was considerably higher (nearly a quarter of centres) at Intermediate level (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

The use of unspecified GCSE requirements

Level	N	%
Foundation	23	7.7
Intermediate	74	24.7
Advanced	10	3.3

The use of ambiguous entry requirements may have been related to the centres’ need to maintain a higher level of flexibility in order to ensure that group sizes were viable. Alternatively it may have been a reflection of the target group for these programmes. If the target group was those who were unsuitable for A Level then students were unlikely to have a reasonable number of GCSEs at A - C grades. Pressure to admit students to Intermediate level programmes increased when there was no Foundation level offered in centres.

Entry to Foundation programmes

Formal entry criteria for Foundation level programmes were rare (Table 4.8). The majority of centres had no entry requirements and students were selected by their inability to do anything else or, in a small number of instances, were on the special needs register. This created a negative image for Foundation level.

Table 4.8

Foundation level entry requirements

Entry requirements	N	%
None	63	47.4
Interview/experience	25	18.8
Unspecified GCSE results	23	17.3
Higher than DfEE recommendations	9	6.7
DfEE recommendations	8	6.0
Lower than DfEE recommendations	3	2.3
National Curriculum level	2	1.5
Total	133	100.0

Where there were entry requirements these included unspecified GCSE grades and numbers. At this level centres were more than three times more likely to use an interview or take account of previous experience than at other levels. This was indicative of the fact that most Foundation level was offered in FE Colleges and they needed to interview new students. GNVQ was seen as an opportunity to give students a positive experience and a qualification. A number of centres noted that requirements were waived depending on the student and/or that entry was very much open to negotiation. Additionally, centres used diagnostic tests, course reviews and references to inform recruitment decisions. Centres frequently mentioned motivation, enthusiasm, willingness or an interest in the vocational area as prerequisites for entry.

Entry to Intermediate programmes

Previous research had found that nearly a quarter of Intermediate level programmes had no entry requirements (FEU, 1994b) and that actual requirements varied considerably (Green and Ainley, 1995). This undoubtedly led to inappropriate placing of students on this level (Ofsted, 1994). The current research showed that there was an increasing tendency to be vague about the entry requirements for this level, particularly the number and grades of any GCSE requirements (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Intermediate level entry requirements

Entry requirements	N	%
Unspecified GCSE results	74	30.1
Lower than DfEE recommendations	57	23.2
None	43	17.5
DfEE recommendations	29	11.8
Higher than DfEE recommendations	25	10.1
Interview/experience	15	6.1
National Curriculum level	3	1.2
Total	246	100.0

The current research shows that at Intermediate level entry requirements covered a wider range of experience and achievements. Nearly three quarters of centres had no, low or unspecified entry requirements, confirming the findings of Ofsted (1994) and contrary to statements from centres indicating that they were revising entry criteria (FEU, 1994b). The criteria may have been revised but there was little indication of any tightening or clarification. Where no formal entry requirements were specified or there was open entry, centres made a range of additional comments similar to those at Foundation level.

Entry to Advanced programmes

In 1994 there was considerable agreement on entry criteria for Advanced level (FEU, 1994b)⁹. Table 4.10 shows that the vast majority of centres specified entry requirements that were at least equivalent to the DfEE recommendations (four to five GCSEs at grade C or above) but some centres noted that these were the basis for negotiation. Where no entry requirements were specified or there was open entry, some centres required that students must show ability in the first month, or that requirements were negotiated.

⁹ 65.2 per cent of centres required at least 4 GCSEs (grades C or above) and the average entrant achieved between three or four GCSEs (FEU, 1994b).

Table 4.10

Advanced level entry requirements

Entry requirements	N	%
DfEE recommendations	166	80.6
Lower than DfEE recommendations	16	7.8
Unspecified GCSE results	10	4.8
Higher than DfEE recommendations	7	3.4
None	4	1.9
Interview/experience	3	1.5
Total	206	100.0

Reasons for introducing GNVQs

Previous research established that centres had a variety of reasons for introducing GNVQs (FEU, 1993; TES, 1993; FEU, 1994b; Sims 1994). GNVQs were used as a replacement for qualifications that were being phased out and to meet the needs of students (ED, 1993). They were also used to stop the ‘haemorrhaging’ of post-16 students from schools to FE Colleges (TES, 1993) and to broaden provision, gain funding and compete (Sims, 1994). Sixth Form and FE Colleges believed that GNVQs would improve the status of vocational qualifications, increase participation and achievement rates, enable them to offer flexible programmes, allow delayed choice in the vocational programme or route and be attractive whilst allowing a variety of progression routes (FEU, 1993). There was little evidence of centres electing to offer GNVQs because they were preferred to existing awards (FEU, 1994b). GNVQs were largely introduced because the government was replacing existing vocational awards, GNVQ was becoming the main non-A level qualification and centres (mainly schools) were expanding their provision. This contradicted the finding that centres found GNVQ a better qualification because of its student-centred nature, ability to increase motivation and potential for progression (Hyland and Weller, 1994).

In this section the reasons for the introduction of GNVQs were examined by grouping them into categories determined after the collection of the data. In this research a large number of centres gave more than one reason for introducing GNVQs and all were noted in Table 4.11¹⁰.

Table 4.11

Reasons for introducing GNVQs

Reason for introducing GNVQs	Reason selected		Reason not selected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improve provision/meet needs (including offering an alternative route to HE)	203	67.9	96	32.1	299	100.0
Natural progression to previous courses	75	25.1	224	74.9	299	100.0
Demise of BTEC/other courses	56	18.7	243	81.3	299	100.0
Management decision - had to	45	15.1	254	84.9	299	100.0
Competition	43	14.4	256	85.6	299	100.0
Create/improve work and industry links	36	12.0	263	88.0	299	100.0

Improving provision and meeting student needs

The most popular reason for introducing GNVQs was to improve provision and meet student needs¹¹. In a small number of centres staff commented that students had actually requested the introduction of GNVQs. Centres confirmed previous findings stating they used GNVQ as an alternative route to higher education for those students who could not take A levels (Green and Ainley, 1995). GNVQ was also a route to further education and then, perhaps onto higher education or employment. Centres felt that this flexibility made GNVQ an ‘excellent’ qualification providing a practical course that would be helpful to students irrespective of their education or work intentions. A number of Schools

¹⁰ It was not unusual for centres to give more than one reason (Young et al, 1995).
¹¹ The needs and improvements could be further subdivided into access to progression routes in higher education, further education and work, assessment and delivery style, offer a qualification with status and cater for problem students.

accepted that some of their sixth form students would take one year courses and Intermediate level was most appropriate for this group¹². Centres favoured the 'new methods' of delivery and assessment promoted in GNVQ, particularly student-centred learning, the alternative assessment pattern, flexible unit accreditation, the 'fresh start' provided and the potential to become involved in a course that looked as if it would be 'around for some time'. They noted that these changes would also improve provision and meet the broader needs of students. Contrary to previous research (FEU, 1994b) a large number of centres saw GNVQ as a positive addition to the curriculum for students with specific needs.

Natural progression to previous courses

Even though GCSE resits had been seen as failing (Sutton, 1994; Green and Ainley, 1995) previous research found that only a few centres had replaced academic courses with GNVQs (FEU, 1993). A quarter of respondents viewed GNVQ as a natural progression to previous courses. This included those who saw GNVQ as an alternative to GCSE resits which were seen as failing, inappropriate, not meeting student needs and resulted in poor student motivation and results. Centres in this research adopted the tactic of 'guiding' students towards GNVQ combined with GCSE resits. A level was seen as too academic and NVQs inappropriate. Other centres wanted a course with clear progression and a vocational bias.

Demise of BTEC or other courses

Previous research found that most GNVQs were replacements for existing courses offered in centres with a minority of GNVQs being introduced as new ventures for centres, largely schools (FEU, 1993; Spours, 1995a)¹³. In this research a number of centres cited the demise of BTEC and other courses¹⁴

¹² GNVQ was seen as interesting and achievable in a one year sixth form.

¹³ This was to be expected as many schools were not approved to offer the BTEC programmes that were due to be phased out in post-16 provision.

¹⁴ CPVE and DVE were also being replaced by GNVQ but DVE will not be removed as a course until 2002 - 2003.

as the reason for introducing GNVQs. The phasing out of other courses was an example of 'top down' change with Government policy forcing the awarding bodies and the centres to introduce GNVQs¹⁵. Although a large number of centres went ahead with DVE a number moved to GNVQ as soon as it was practicable. There was no evidence that GNVQ was replacing AS or A levels¹⁶.

Management decision

The introduction of GNVQ was exclusively a management decision in fewer centres. These centres rarely noted any additional reason.

Competition

The Government openly encouraged competition for recruitment and retention of students (Tomlinson, 1995) which was linked to the introduction of GNVQs (Spours, 1995b). This was seen by many as a negative influence (Hillier, 1995) and competition or increasing student numbers should not have been an issue when considering the introduction of GNVQs (NCVQ et al, 1995).

Competition may have been increasing (Tomlinson, 1995) but it did not influence the introduction of GNVQs to the extent that had previously been inferred.

Create or improve work/industry links

Previous research found the majority of schools had some links with local commerce and industry (Ofsted, 1994). These were developed in order to meet the needs of GNVQ as opposed to GNVQs meeting any local industry need. In this research there was little evidence that industry positively

¹⁵ Brandes and Ginnis (1986) noted that, where change was introduced without the support of the classroom teacher, change was often not sustained or integrated into normal practice. Models of change that were implemented from the bottom upwards were more successful even though these models sometimes lacked the resources they required.

¹⁶ Statistics (SCAA, 1995) showed that AS level entries increased steadily from 1990 - 94. A level entries rose more dramatically between 1991 - 92 but appeared to plateau after this date.

influenced the introduction of GNVQs with this the least likely reason for their introduction. This possibly showed a lack of concern for industry requirements and may be further evidence of the division between what academia and industry see as the purposes of education.

Additional comments from centres

Some centres made additional comments that illustrated what they saw as the multi-purpose nature of GNVQs. GNVQs allowed centres to engage in centre or staff development and to increase staff flexibility. Some centres felt that they had little choice in introducing GNVQs if they were to maintain funding and that employers had begun to look for additional qualifications from post-16 students. Others liked the credit given for key skills and work experience or expressed a general belief in the qualification. The lack of reference to the NTETs in responses was in contrast to previous findings (Ofsted, 1994; Young et al, 1995). This may have been an indication that staff felt far removed from the implications of the NTETs or that increasing levels of participation and attainment were only seen as by-products of introducing GNVQs. A small number of centres referred to bridging or breaking down the academic/vocational divide noting that GNVQs made an effective combination with NVQs, ensured parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications and fulfilled the need for vocational training¹⁷.

Awarding body approval

The questionnaire sought to establish the awarding body used for approval by the respondents. Centres were approved by different awarding bodies with some having more than one awarding body granting approval. Table 4.12 shows that the majority of centres offered programmes with one awarding body with BTEC approving the majority of centres. Nearly as many centres had Multiple approvals as were approved by RSAEB alone. As the market and competition developed it was likely

¹⁷ Course combinations offered by centres (discussed later in this Chapter) did not support these statements.

that centres would rationalize approvals rather than allow different departments to operate under different approvals¹⁸.

Table 4.12

Awarding body approval

Awarding body	N	%
BTEC	131	43.8
City & Guilds	71	23.7
RSAEB	52	17.4
Multiple approvals	45	15.1
Total	299	100.0

GNVQ experience

Initially, different forms of collaboration were found to promote the development of GNVQs (ED, 1992; Ofsted, 1994; Boswell, 1995) but franchise arrangements were short-lived (FEU, 1994b) or inappropriate (Sims, 1994)¹⁹. Whilst collaboration may have positively affected staff and curriculum development it was difficult to see how it contributed to the rationalisation of local provision. As GNVQ became more established the amount of formal collaboration decreased (ED, 1993; FEU, 1994b; Sims, 1994). This research found that most centres offered GNVQs under their own approval but that some centres had previous or existing experience operating as part of another centre's approval in a franchise or consortium agreement²⁰ (Table 4.13). Only a small number of centres (5 per cent) had no experience of their own approval.

¹⁸ Choice of awarding body was influenced by their previous experience or management influence (e.g. moving towards one awarding body to deal with all programmes) (Sims, 1994; FEU, 1994b).

¹⁹ Sims found staff were more intent on making GNVQ work than in developing consortia or franchises. One of the awarding bodies advised centres against franchising during the pilot phase of the Built Environment. Colleges themselves had doubts whether schools had the expertise or equipment to offer aspects of Built Environment. However, some colleges franchised other GNVQs as a marketing ploy with local students.

²⁰ With the consortium approach there is sometimes an agreement that centres share the delivery and assessment of programmes between institutions. Each delivers programmes appropriate to their resources and expertise.

Table 4.13

GNVQ experience and approval status²¹

Approval status of centres	Own GNVQ Centre Approval		Centres operating as part of a Consortium		Centres operating as part of a Franchise	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Length of previous GNVQ experience						
No experience	15	5.0	257	86.0	274	91.6
Less than one year	8	2.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
One year	72	24.1	6	2.0	6	2.0
Two years	111	37.1	19	6.4	12	4.0
Three years or more	93	31.1	17	5.6	5	1.7
Total	299	100.0	299	100.0	299	100.0

The number of centres with their own approval rose during the first few years of GNVQ and over two thirds of centres had two or more years experience as an approved centre. Few centres were involved in consortium or franchise arrangements which appeared to have a small but constant core of centres with little growth.

Previous experience of other vocational courses

The questionnaire gathered information on the previous vocational experience of centres²². Pilot centres were expected to have previous experience in vocational education (Harrop, 1995) and other research confirmed that most centres offering GNVQs in 1993-94 had some vocational or pre-vocational experience (FEU, 1994b). Previous vocational experience was never a requirement of centre approval. The responses in Table 4.14 show that centres had a range of previous experience.

²¹ A small number of centres offered different programmes under separate arrangements. For example, Business and Leisure and Tourism with their own centre approval but Manufacturing was offered as part of a consortium.

²² Several factors may have affected the length of a centre's previous experience. When a qualification was introduced, competition between qualifications, the length of pilot phases, the life span of qualifications, controlled phasing out or withdrawal of qualifications (including dates) and the type of qualification matched to the type of centre all had a bearing on the responses.

Table 4.14

Previous vocational experience of centres

Length of experience	5 years plus		Over 3 and up to 5 years		Over 1 and up to 3 years		None or less than 1 year		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Previous courses										
CPVE	107	35.8	64	21.4	33	11.0	95	31.7	299	100
DVE	34	11.4	57	19.1	63	21.1	145	48.5	299	100
BTEC First	55	18.4	23	7.7	38	12.7	183	61.2	299	100
NVQ	39	13.0	22	7.4	32	10.7	206	68.9	299	100
RSA Initial Awards	51	17.1	11	3.7	22	7.4	215	71.9	299	100
City & Guilds 365, 778	44	14.7	15	5.0	20	6.7	220	73.6	299	100
Other	31	10.4	12	4.0	7	2.3	249	83.3	299	100

CPVE accounted for the majority of experience of three years or more. Few centres had little or no experience of CPVE with twice as many centres having five or more years experience compared to other qualifications²³. DVE experience was fairly equally divided between centres with one to three years experience and those with three to five years experience²⁴. Fewer centres had BTEC experience, reflecting the number of Schools in the sample. Centres had a similar level of experience of City & Guilds and RSA courses, and NVQs. This was particularly noticeable when the centres were formed into an experience band of three to five plus years. A number of centres had ‘Other course’ experience. This confirmed the wide range of experience, usually of five years plus including specific vocational courses (e.g. Pitman, NNEB, shorthand and typing, marketing), key skills (e.g. word and number power) and foundation and vocational access courses.

How GNVQs were offered

Centres were advised that they could combine NVQ units, A levels, GCSEs and GNVQs but the reality was very different (FEU, 1994b; Young et al 1995). In order to establish the potential to combine GNVQ with other programmes and how GNVQ was being aligned within the curriculum, centres were asked to note which courses were offered at the centre and whether these were on a full

²³ As this was an older qualification, potentially more centres could have more experience.
²⁴ It must be remembered that DVE was introduced shortly before GNVQ and the potential length of experience was different to some of the other qualifications.

and/or part-time basis (Table 4.15). GNVQ was already the most popular full-time course offered and it's potential as a part-time course was already being developed. Centres rarely offered individual courses alone. They were more likely to offer a 'package' of qualifications and experience alongside GNVQ.

Table 4.15

Full and Part-time provision in centres

Mode of delivery	Full-time		Part-time	
Course	N	% of all centres	N	% of all centres
GNVQ	291	18.7	40	9.1
GCSE	279	17.9	59	13.4
A Level	268	17.2	56	12.7
AS Level	223	14.3	43	9.8
RSA course	131	8.4	50	11.4
BTEC (First/National)	106	6.8	52	11.8
City & Guilds course	106	6.8	49	11.2
NVQ	78	5.0	57	13.0
Other vocational course	76	4.9	33	7.6
Total	1558	100.0	439	100.0

The vast majority of centres offered what could be described as a full range of academic courses alongside GNVQ as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Academic courses offered alongside GNVQs

Academic course combinations offered	N	%
GCSE, AS & A level	225	75.3
GCSE & A level	46	15.4
GCSE	18	6.0
None	10	3.3
Total	299	100.0

Fewer centres offered a range of vocational qualifications alongside GNVQ as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Vocational courses offered alongside GNVQs

Vocational course combinations offered	N	%
One or more of BTEC, City & Guilds or RSA (awarding body course)	89	29.8
Awarding body course & NVQ & other vocational course	44	14.7
Awarding body course & NVQ	39	13.0
Awarding body course & other vocational course	21	7.0
Other vocational courses	12	4.0
NVQ	6	2.0
NVQ and other vocational courses	4	1.3
None	84	28.2
Total	299	100.0

In order of popularity there appeared to be three groups of full time courses emerging (Table 4.18). An academic package was the most popular potentially increasing the division between academic and vocational qualifications.

Table 4.18

Overview of courses offered alongside GNVQ

Group One GNVQ &	Group Two GNVQ &	Group Three GNVQ &
GCSE	RSA course	NVQ
A level	City & Guilds course	Other vocational course
AS level	BTEC course	

Profiles for different types of centre

The data was examined to establish if there were any differences or similarities between different types of centre. The variation between the range of GNVQs offered in different types of centre had

already received adverse comment (FEU, 1994b). This research examined the vocational areas offered in different types of centre irrespective of the level and Table 4.19 presents a picture of this provision.

Table 4.19

Vocational areas offered in different centres

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
Vocational area	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Business	192	28.4	36	13.1	19	22.9	15	13.8
Health & Social Care	167	24.7	36	13.1	15	18.1	18	16.5
Leisure & Tourism	127	18.8	34	12.3	14	16.9	14	12.9
Art & Design	77	11.4	31	11.2	12	14.5	14	12.9
Science	37	5.5	25	9.1	11	13.2	8	7.3
Manufacturing	35	5.2	11	4.0	1	1.2	5	4.6
Information Technology	10	1.6	22	8.0	6	7.2	8	7.3
Engineering	12	1.8	20	7.2	3	3.6	4	3.7
Hospitality & Catering	8	1.2	18	6.5	0	0.0	9	8.2
Media, Communication and Production	7	1.0	15	5.4	2	2.4	5	4.6
Construction & the Built Environment	2	0.3	15	5.4	0	0.0	6	5.5
Management Studies	1	0.1	11	4.0	0	0.0	3	2.7
Retail & Distribution	0	0.0	2	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	675	100.0	276	100.0	83	100.0	109	100.0

The majority of Schools offered a very limited range of vocational areas with Business, Health and Social Care and Leisure and Tourism dominating the provision. Most Schools were unlikely to offer any other vocational areas. Sixth Form Colleges showed an even more restricted provision with four of the less popular GNVQs not offered at all. In these centres Major league GNVQs dominated the provision although Science was almost as prevalent as Art & Design and Information Technology and already showed considerable growth. Health and Social Care and Leisure and Tourism had almost equal provision which mirrored the pattern of FE Colleges. FE Colleges and Other Institutions were the only types of centre to offer the full range of vocational areas, being more than twice as likely to offer some vocational areas compared to Schools.

Previous research had shown that schools were more likely to offer Intermediate than Advanced level and that colleges were almost as likely to offer Advanced as Intermediate level (FEU, 1994b). Prior to this research most centres stated their intention to develop Advanced level for their second year of operation (Harrop, 1995; Hyland, 1994d; Hyland and Weller, 1994), reflecting their need to provide internal progression routes for Intermediate students (Spours, 1995a). Table 4.20 shows the different levels offered in the different types of centres.

Table 4.20

Levels offered in different centres

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced	75	33.9	29	72.5	8	42.1	10	52.5
Intermediate and Advanced	70	31.7	8	20.0	8	42.1	4	21.0
Foundation and Intermediate	22	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3
Advanced only	13	5.9	2	5.0	1	5.3	1	5.3
Intermediate only	38	17.2	0	0.0	2	10.5	1	5.3
Foundation only	1	0.4	1	2.5	0	0.0	1	5.3
No response	2	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3
Total	221	100.0	40	100.0	19	100.0	19	100.0

The current research undertaken a year later shows a different pattern emerging with Schools offering a higher proportion of multiple levels, displaying a similar pattern of provision to Sixth Form Colleges. This was indicative of an expansion in provision that could have been anticipated as many Schools used Intermediate level as a starting point for the implementation and development of GNVQs. Schools and Sixth Form Colleges were as likely to offer Intermediate and Advanced levels as they were to offer a combination of all three levels. FE Colleges were much more likely to offer all three levels. It was apparent that a number of centres had developed Advanced level but few had introduced Foundation level. Where centres did not offer Foundation level but had open recruitment

to Intermediate GNVQ there was a danger that the centre would recruit students who were not capable of completing an Intermediate GNVQ.

The distribution of levels for the different vocational areas offered in centres showed that, other than the four Major league GNVQs, there were very few centres that offered other vocational areas at Foundation level confirming previous findings (Hyland and Weller, 1994). The original five pilot areas remained the most popular. Foundation level GNVQs piloted in 1994-95 showed a fairly even distribution of centres which may have been related to the selection of the pilot centres (Appendix 4.1). At Intermediate level the Major league GNVQs dominated provision even though it was at this level that most centres offered a broader range of vocational areas. At Intermediate level Schools and Sixth Form Colleges narrowed the gap in provision when compared to FE Colleges. Provision of all vocational areas at this level rose in all types of centre (Appendix 4.2). This confirmed that Intermediate level continued to be the most popular level even though it was least likely to be offered in isolation. At Advanced level the number of centres offering each vocational area decreased. The number of centres offering Business fell by 20 per cent but provision of the other three Major league GNVQs fell by 40 per cent. For the Minor league GNVQs there appeared to be a similar decrease but at a lower level of 10 - 15 per cent as fewer centres offered Advanced level (Appendix 4.3).

The research confirmed that there were differences between the vocational areas and levels offered by different types of centre. Whilst it had been found that colleges offered a wide range of GNVQs at Intermediate and Advanced levels and schools offered most courses at Intermediate level only (Green and Ainley, 1995), this research showed that the pattern of levels offered was more complex. For example, Art and Design programmes offered in different centres followed Green and Ainley's findings but several other areas had a different pattern of how multiple levels were offered.

Art and Design in Schools was predominantly offered at Intermediate level alone or in combination with other levels (Appendix 4.4). Leisure and Tourism in Schools followed a similar pattern (Appendix 4.5). Sixth Form Colleges tended to offer Intermediate and Advanced level providing the

possibility of progression. FE Colleges offered either Intermediate and Advanced or all three levels. In Business there was a tendency to offer at least two levels in all types of centres (Appendix 4.6). However, there were still significant numbers of Schools who only offered Intermediate level in this vocational area. Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to offer Intermediate and Advanced levels. FE Colleges were fairly equally divided between offering Intermediate and Advanced level, or all three levels. Leisure and Tourism in Sixth Form and FE Colleges followed a similar pattern.

Health and Social Care followed a different pattern with Schools predominantly offering Intermediate level and Sixth Form and FE Colleges, and Other Institutions likely to offer all three levels (Appendix 4.7). Information Technology showed further variations (Appendix 4.8). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to offer Intermediate level only or Intermediate and Advanced level. FE Colleges followed a similar pattern to other vocational areas offering Intermediate and Advanced or all three levels. In Science very few centres offered Foundation level only with Schools more likely to offer Intermediate level only and Sixth Form and FE Colleges offering Intermediate and Advanced levels (Appendix 4.9). Manufacturing (Appendix 4.10) and Engineering (Appendix 4.11) were offered mainly at Intermediate and Advanced levels. The phased introduction of vocational areas and levels did not appear to affect the overall popularity of vocational areas or levels.

The vast majority of centres (approximately 80 per cent), had the same entry requirements at the same level irrespective of the vocational area (Appendix 4.12). FE Colleges and Other Institutions were most likely to have variations between vocational areas (16.7 and 15.4 per cent respectively).

Although most centres did not have entry requirements for Foundation level, Schools and FE Colleges had some major differences in the requirements they noted (Appendix 4.13). Contrary to anecdotal information, FE Colleges were the least likely to have no entry requirements. Where there were requirements, Schools and Sixth Form Colleges favoured unspecified GCSE achievement whereas FE Colleges favoured interviews and the broader previous experience of students²⁵.

²⁵ Schools already had access to information on student performance that could be used in the recruitment process whereas other centres may be recruiting 'unknown' students.

Intermediate entry requirements (Appendix 4.14) had a similar pattern to Foundation level except in centres where no Foundation level was offered. In these centres there were some interesting differences as shown in Tables 4.21 and 4.22. Schools and Sixth Form Colleges not offering Foundation level were more likely to have no entry criteria for Intermediate level.

Table 4.21

Intermediate entry requirements in centres with no Foundation level

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entry requirements								
Equal to, or higher than recommended	19	10.4	3	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lower entry criteria	63	34.4	2	6.1	5	31.2	2	14.3
No criteria	27	14.8	2	6.1	3	18.8	2	14.3
Missing values	74	40.4	26	78.7	8	50.0	10	71.4
Total	183	100.0	33	100.0	16	100.0	14	100.0

Table 4.22

Intermediate entry requirements in centres offering Foundation level

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entry requirements								
Equal to, or higher than recommended	20	10.9	7	21.2	4	25.0	1	7.1
Lower entry criteria	48	26.2	17	51.5	3	18.8	9	64.3
No criteria	6	3.3	2	6.1	1	6.2	0	0.0
No response	109	59.6	7	21.2	8	50.0	4	28.6
Total	183	100.0	33	100.0	16	100.0	14	100.0

When Schools offered Foundation level their entry criteria for Intermediate level were more likely to be equal to or higher than those recommended. In FE Colleges and Other Institutions the pattern was different with increased likelihood of there being low entry criteria for Intermediate level when Foundation level was offered.

At Advanced level schools had previously been found to have less stringent entry requirements for GNVQs compared to A and AS levels (ED, 1993). At this level (Table 4.23) there was less variation between the centres. Schools and FE Colleges followed a very similar pattern for Advanced level entry requirements. Sixth Form Colleges appeared to be much stricter in their requirements adhering to or exceeding the recommendations. Other Institutions were the most likely to have no entry requirements at this level. When Intermediate level was used for entry to Advanced level centres usually required a Merit or Distinction.

Table 4.23

Advanced level entry requirements in different centres

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
Entry requirements	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
DfEE recommendations	115	79.9	28	82.4	14	93.3	9	69.2
Lower than DfEE recommendations	12	8.3	3	8.8	0	0.0	1	7.7
Unspecified GCSE results	7	4.9	2	5.9	0	0.0	1	7.7
Higher than DfEE recommendations	5	3.5	1	2.9	1	6.7	0	0.0
None	2	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	15.4
Interview/experience	3	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	144	100.0	34	100.0	15	100.0	13	100.0

The reasons for introducing GNVQs varied considerably between different types of centre (Appendix 4.15). Schools introduced GNVQs primarily to improve provision and meet student needs. Sixth Form Colleges were twice as likely as other centres to give multiple reasons for the introduction of GNVQ. They also introduced GNVQs to improve their provision and meet student needs. In addition, a third of them were influenced by the need to compete²⁶. FE Colleges introduced GNVQs largely due to the demise of other courses or as a management decision. The latter leads to cause for concern particularly in the light of other findings regarding the level of knowledge required to implement

²⁶ Previous research found that many Sixth Form Colleges were using GNVQs to extend their provision, particularly in attracting less able students (FEU, 1994b).

GNVQs (FEU, 1994b). Compared to other centres, Other Institutions were the most likely to be influenced by industry.

The distribution of awarding body approvals was examined by centre type and is shown in Table 4.24. BTEC had the largest share of the market irrespective of centre type. FE Colleges had either BTEC only or Multiple approvals that include BTEC. This pattern was repeated in Other Institutions. Sixth Form College approvals were fairly equally divided between all three awarding bodies and those that had Multiple approvals. The approvals for Schools showed a shift in the market towards BTEC²⁷.

Table 4.24
Awarding body approval in different centres

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
Awarding body	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
BTEC	92	41.6	26	65.0	5	26.3	8	42.1
City & Guilds	62	28.1	3	7.5	5	26.3	1	5.3
RSAEB	46	20.8	0	0.0	4	21.1	2	10.5
Multiple approvals	21	9.5	11	27.5	5	26.3	8	42.1
Total	221	100.0	40	100.0	19	100.0	19	100.0

The length of GNVQ approval experience varied according to centre type (Appendix 4.16). Although centre approval amongst Schools and Sixth Form Colleges had grown since GNVQ became available to all institutions the majority of these centres had two years or less approval experience. The vast majority of Other Institutions and FE Colleges had much more experience as approved centres (three years or more) compared to Schools and Sixth Form Colleges. As previous courses had mostly been run for longer than GNVQ it was relevant to consider potential differences in this previous experience as shown in Table 4.25.

²⁷ Previous research (FEU, 1994b) found that most schools were approved by City & Guilds.

Table 4.25

Previous vocational experience in different centres

Type of centre	Schools		FE Colleges		Sixth Form Colleges		Other Institutions	
Previous courses	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
CPVE	153	28.8	27	16.7	13	27.1	12	19.4
DVE	125	23.5	14	8.6	8	16.7	8	12.9
BTEC First	67	12.7	36	22.2	7	14.6	3	4.8
RSA Initial Awards	65	12.2	17	10.5	3	6.3	11	17.7
City & Guilds 365, 778	50	9.4	20	12.3	4	8.3	8	12.9
NVQ	38	7.2	39	24.1	7	14.6	15	24.2
Other	33	6.2	9	5.6	6	12.4	5	8.1
Total	531	100.0	162	100.0	48	100.0	62	100.0

Although it was previously found that most school experience was in GCSE, AS and A levels (ED, 1993) this research showed that there were large numbers of Schools with previous experience of vocational courses. However, Schools and Sixth Form Colleges had far less previous vocational experience compared to FE Colleges and Other Institutions. All types of centres had experience of CPVE. DVE was predominately a school experience. BTEC First, NVQ, RSA and City & Guilds experience was largely confined to FE Colleges and Other Institutions. Staff in Schools and Sixth Form Colleges did have some experience of BTEC and NVQ programmes²⁸. Staff in Schools had slightly less experience of ‘Other’ courses.

The data was analysed to explore if different combinations of additional qualifications were offered with GNVQs in different types of centre. FE Colleges and Other Institutions were less likely to offer academic courses with GNVQ programmes (Appendix 4.17). Schools and Sixth Form Colleges were as likely to offer GNVQ as GCSE or A level. It was interesting to note that, even though GNVQ was relatively new, it had rapidly become as available as traditional full-time academic courses. In contrast, FE Colleges were twice as likely to offer vocational courses with GNVQ compared to Sixth Form Colleges and Schools (Appendix 4.18).

²⁸ Although this might not necessarily have been gained in their own centre.

The type of centre attended affected the package of qualifications offered to the students at all levels. At Foundation level GCSE dominated possible combinations in all centres with some kind of vocational course being the next most popular combination (Table 4.26 and Appendix 4.19). The most popular type of other course offered with this level, irrespective of centre type, was key skill related. Other Institutions were more likely to offer key skill related courses than GCSE. Schools were more likely to offer Foundation level students complementary vocational courses such as Emergency Aid and Food Hygiene and were unlikely to offer NVQs. In Other Institutions the possibility of combining Foundation level with NVQs rose and these centres were more likely offer distinct packages of qualifications compared to other centres.

Table 4.26
Foundation level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres

Priority	1	2	3	4	5
Centre type					
Schools	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	Additional key skill	Other vocational course	NVQ
Sixth Form Colleges	GCSE	Other vocational course	Complementary vocational course	Additional key skill	NVQ
FE Colleges	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	NVQ	Additional key skill	Other vocational course
Other Institutions	NVQ	Additional key skill	Complementary vocational course	GCSE	

At Intermediate level GCSE again dominated the packages offered in most types of centre²⁹ (Table 4.27 and Appendix 4.20). NVQ provision in Schools remained restricted compared to FE Colleges and Other Institutions although most centres offered complementary vocational courses. Intermediate students in Schools were twice as likely to have access to an A level than those in Other Institutions. This was possibly the result of how GNVQ was timetabled with academic qualifications as opposed to being a realistic choice. There was an interesting division between FE Colleges and Other

²⁹ The dominance of GCSEs was initially identified in 1994 (FEU, 1994b).

Institutions, and Schools and Sixth Form Colleges, with the latter having a more academic bias in the combinations offered.

Table 4.27

Intermediate level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres

Priority	1	2	3	4	5
Centre type					
Schools	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	A level	AS level	Additional key skill
Sixth Form Colleges	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	AS level	NVQ	Additional key skill
FE Colleges	GCSE	NVQ	Complementary vocational course	Additional key skill	Other vocational course
Other Institutions	Complementary vocational course	NVQ	GCSE	Additional key skill	

A level dominated Advanced level combinations but again there was a split between the types of centres and the combinations offered with GNVQs (Table 4.28 and Appendix 4.21). GCSE was as likely to be combined with GNVQ as AS level and, overall, was less likely to be offered in combination in any centre. Schools were far less likely than other types of centres to offer courses in combination with this level. This may have been an acknowledgment of the difficulties some students experienced in trying to complete an Advanced GNVQ even when an additional course was not taken.

Table 4.28

Advanced level GNVQ course packages offered in different centres

Priority	1	2	3	4	5
Centre type					
Schools	A level	AS level	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	
Sixth Form Colleges	A level	AS level	GCSE	Complementary vocational course	NVQ
FE Colleges	A level	NVQ	GCSE	AS level	Complementary vocational course
Other Institutions	A level	Complementary vocational course	GCSE	NVQ	AS level

The research confirmed the prediction that an A level/GNVQ duopoly would exclude NVQs (Hyland, 1994c). Combining GNVQ with additional units of NVQs or GNVQs remained a low priority³⁰ at all levels, even though the pattern in Sixth Form Colleges, FE Colleges and Other Institutions showed that the potential to combine NVQs and GNVQs rose with the level of GNVQ. Other courses that centres were most likely to offer in combination with GNVQ fell into two main categories³¹, either a complementary vocational course (First/Emergency Aid) or a course that enhanced key skills provision/achievement (Information Technology). The potential for these combinations changed with the level of GNVQ. Compared to Foundation and Advanced students Intermediate students were almost twice as likely to be offered key skill/complementary academic courses. As the level of GNVQ rose there was a slight increase in the availability of additional vocational courses. GCSEs were generally the third choice combination suggesting that most students had acquired grade C or above in the required number of GCSEs for entry or that centres saw little point in adding to GCSE achievements.

The influence of awarding body approval

Awarding body approval influenced a number of aspects of provision including the vocational areas offered in centres (Appendix 4.22). It has already been noted that the historical nature of departmental affiliation with awarding bodies influenced some departments to gain approval with a specific awarding body. Multiple approval increased the likelihood of any vocational area being offered. These centres were two to three times more likely to offer the Minor league GNVQs and offered twice as many vocational areas as RSAEB centres. RSAEB centres were the least likely to offer many vocational areas (the exception to this was Science which they were most likely to offer). In BTEC centres Engineering and Information Technology were already more popular than Manufacturing. In City & Guilds centres Health and Social Care was the most popular area and Manufacturing was more popular than Science.

³⁰ This may have been related to their relative newness (FEU, 1994b).

³¹ The other courses that were specified by the respondents in the survey could be categorized using the information from the preliminary and pilot research.

There were differences in how entry requirements were used according to awarding body approval (Appendix 4.23). BTEC centres had fewer variations in how entry requirements were used between vocational areas compared to other awarding bodies or those with Multiple approvals. At Foundation level centres with Multiple approvals were the most likely to have no entry requirements (Appendix 4.24). BTEC and City & Guilds centres had similar requirements. RSAEB centres were the most likely to adhere to recommendations. At Intermediate level BTEC centres and those with Multiple approvals were less likely to have no entry requirements but they were also the most likely to use unspecified GCSE requirements (Appendix 4.25). City & Guilds and RSAEB centres were most likely to have no entry requirements at this level. At Advanced level, RSAEB centres were much less likely to adhere to recommended entry requirements and had more variations in entry requirements compared to all other awarding bodies (Appendix 4.26).

Centres approved by different awarding bodies gave different reasons for introducing GNVQs. The main reason for the introduction of GNVQs (to improve provision/meet needs) did not change according to awarding body approval but the importance of the other reasons varied (Appendix 4.27). These variations were probably related to the type of centre. For example, centres with BTEC or Multiple approvals were most likely to introduce GNVQs due to the demise of other courses and/or a management decision and least likely to be improving provision/meet needs.

GNVQ approval experience varied between different awarding bodies (Appendix 4.28). City & Guilds had more centres with less approval experience (64.8 per cent with two years or less). RSAEB centres and those with Multiple approvals had the most experience of consortium and franchise arrangements. All centres had a range of previous vocational experience irrespective of awarding body approval and, as expected, tended to have more experience of their own awarding body's courses (Appendix 4.29). Centres with Multiple approvals were nearly twice as likely to have NVQ experience (64.4 per cent) and along with RSAEB centres had a higher level of 'Other' experience.

The influence of GNVQ and previous vocational experience

The type and length of a centres approval status and their previous vocational experience were considered as potential variables. A combination of total experience³² and course specific experience was used to explore potential differences. This experience influenced a number of aspects of provision. FE Colleges had much more previous experience than all other centres and Sixth Form Colleges the least previous experience (Appendix 4.30). A centre’s previous vocational experience influenced the range of levels offered for specific vocational areas. Various vocational areas were compared. The first of these, Business, can be seen in Table 4.29. The DVE and CPVE experience of centres offering Business was similar to those offering Manufacturing (Appendix 4.31). Higher levels of experience resulted in an increased likelihood of Intermediate and Advanced levels being offered. Centres with less experience tended to offer lower, single levels of vocational areas.

Table 4.29
Previous experience of centres offering Business

Previous experience	DVE		CPVE		BTEC		City & Guilds		RSA		NVQ		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Levels and combinations														
Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced	38	14.6	50	19.1	46	17.6	26	9.9	15	5.8	37	14.1	18	6.9
Intermediate and Advanced	52	19.8	78	29.8	46	17.6	30	11.5	47	17.9	32	12.2	13	5.0
Foundation and Intermediate	11	4.2	10	3.8	2	0.8	3	1.1	1	0.4	4	1.5	2	0.8
Advanced only	9	3.4	11	4.2	5	1.9	7	2.7	6	2.3	6	2.3	5	1.9
Intermediate only	33	12.6	33	12.6	14	5.3	8	3.1	15	5.7	9	3.4	7	2.7
Foundation only	1	0.4	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.4
No response	118	45.0	79	30.1	149	56.8	188	71.7	174	66.5	174	66.5	216	82.3
Total	262	100	262	100	262	100	262	100	262	100	262	100	262	100

Health and Social Care and Leisure and Tourism centres (Appendix 4.32 and 4.33) had a similar

³² The total previous vocational experience of centres was calculated according to the methodology.

pattern of experience to Business centres. This was not surprising as these were offered by the majority of centres. This provided a clear pattern of the experience of centres who offered Major league GNVQs. NVQ experience was greater for centres who offered all three levels of these GNVQs. Centres that offered Advanced Manufacturing had a range of experience but centres offering all three levels had more NVQ experience. DVE and CPVE were strong characteristics of these centres. Art and Design centres broadly followed the same pattern of experience (Appendix 4.34). Centres that offered Intermediate and Advanced level Science had more CPVE and NVQ experience (Appendix 4.35). Most Science centres appeared to have a core of DVE experience. The higher the level of NVQ experience and experience of other vocational course the more likely it was that a centre offered higher levels of Science.

Previous vocational experience also affected how entry requirements were used at different levels. At Foundation level the less experienced the centre the higher the entry requirements even though the number and grade of GCSEs was likely to be unspecified (Appendix 4.36). At Intermediate level centres with the least experience showed extremes of practice in that they were the most likely to have either higher or no requirements. This confusion was less apparent in more experienced centres (Appendix 4.37) and was confirmed at Advanced level where the more experience the centre had the more likely they were to adhere to the recommended entry requirements or higher (Appendix 4.38). Less experience resulted in increased use of lower or no entry requirements at this level.

Table 4.30 shows that as centre experience increased the reason for introducing GNVQs changed. Improving provision/meeting needs and competition became less important as previous centre experience increased. The importance of providing a natural progression to previous courses increased with experience. The more experienced the centre the greater the previous provision would have been and the greater the need to replace these courses. This resulted in a steady rise in the number of centres that selected the demise of BTEC/other courses as the reason for introduction. These courses were perceived as nearing the end of their 'shelf life'. This pattern was repeated when GNVQ approval experience was examined (Appendix 4.39).

Table 4.30

Previous vocational experience and reasons for introducing GNVQs

Previous vocational experience	2 - 5 points		6 - 8 points		9 or more points	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reason for introducing GNVQs						
Improve provision/meet needs	45	50.0	40	50.0	98	38.4
Natural progression to previous courses	10	11.1	12	15.0	50	19.6
Demise of BTEC/other courses	7	7.8	9	11.2	38	14.9
Management decision - had to	10	11.1	6	7.6	27	10.7
Competition	9	10.0	8	10.0	21	8.2
Create/improve work and industry links	9	10.0	5	6.2	21	8.2
Total	90	100.0	80	100.0	255	100.0

Increasing GNVQ approval experience also had a largely positive influence on the entry requirements at different levels. At Foundation and Intermediate level increased experienced led to increasing use of the recommended requirements (Appendix 4.40 and 4.41). Surprisingly, at Advanced level the use of lower entry requirements increased as approval experience increased and centres became less likely to use the recommended requirements (Appendix 4.42). The exception to this were those centres with other types of approval experience.

The influence of the vocational areas and levels offered

It was found that there were variations between the levels offered for different vocational areas as noted in Table 4.31. Health and Social Care was the most popular vocational area at Foundation level. At Intermediate and Advanced levels Business was the most popular. The popularity of Manufacturing decreased as the level increased. With the exception of Business, Intermediate level

was the most popular level for the Major league GNVQs. However, Advanced level was likely to be as popular as Intermediate level for the Minor league GNVQs.

Table 4.31

Popularity of different levels offered

Level	Foundation		Intermediate		Advanced	
Vocational area	N	%	N	%	N	%
Business	78	19.8	240	23.7	192	27.2
Health & Social Care	109	27.7	221	21.8	130	18.4
Leisure & Tourism	76	19.2	175	17.3	103	14.6
Art & Design	40	10.1	118	11.6	69	9.8
Manufacturing	29	7.3	45	4.4	17	2.4
Construction & the Built Environment	14	3.5	21	2.1	16	2.3
Hospitality & Catering	14	3.5	27	2.7	24	3.4
Information Technology	13	3.3	40	3.9	33	4.7
Science	11	2.8	63	6.2	59	8.4
Engineering	9	2.3	37	3.6	23	3.3
Media ³³			24	2.5	21	3.0
Management					16	2.2
Retail & Distribution	2	0.5	2	0.2	2	0.3
Total	395	100.0	1013	100.0	705	100.0

Respondents were specifically asked about variations in entry requirements between vocational areas. When variations between the entry requirements for different vocational areas were noted they were likely to occur in Art and Design, Science, Construction and Engineering. In Science, Construction and Engineering centres often required GCSE grade C or above in Maths or Engineering for admission to Intermediate or Advanced programmes³⁴. In Art and Design the students were frequently required to produce their current portfolio with interviews and experience also noted as important requirements. When variations in entry requirements were noted, Business and Art and Design followed similar patterns with more centres offering Business having variations compared to other vocational areas. This was proportional to the increase in the number of centres (Table 4.32).

³³ Media and Management were not available at all levels.
³⁴ Some centres specified Maths and English at C or above as a requirement for admission to any GNVQ programme (a D or lower would not be considered).

Table 4.32

Comparison of variations in entry requirements for Art and Design and Business

Vocational area	Art & Design centres		% of centres with varying entry requirements		Business centres	
	N	%	Art & Design	Business	N	%
Level						
Foundation	13	4.3	1	1.7	26	8.7
Intermediate	40	13.4	3.7	6	80	26.8
Advanced	23	7.7	3.3	5.3	64	21.4

As the number of centres increased there was a likelihood that a larger number of them had variable requirements reducing the potential for standardising entry requirements nationally. In terms of entry criteria, the less popular GNVQs were generally no more difficult to access than other GNVQs.

There were very few differences in the reasons for introducing GNVQs for the Major league GNVQs (Appendix 4.43). Art and Design was the exception to this in that they were least likely to have introduced GNVQs in order to compete but most likely to have taken a management decision.

Information Technology was the exception to the pattern in Minor league GNVQs (Table 4.33). They were least likely to use GNVQs as a natural progression to previous courses offered, indicating that this might have been a first venture into Information Technology qualifications for many centres.

They were most likely to have introduced Information Technology as a management decision.

Table 4.33

Reasons for introducing Minor league GNVQs

Vocational area	Manufacturing		Information Technology		Engineering	
Reasons for introduction	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improve provision/meet needs (including offering an alternative route to HE)	27	34.2	21	28.8	18	30.5
Natural progression to previous courses	12	15.2	8	10.9	10	16.9
Demise of BTEC/other courses	14	17.7	16	21.9	13	22.0
Management decision - had to	12	15.1	16	21.9	11	18.6
Competition	7	8.9	7	9.6	2	3.4
Create/improve work and industry links	7	8.9	5	6.9	5	8.6
Total	79	100.0	73	100.0	59	100.0

Summary of profiles

The majority of centres introduced full-time GNVQs to meet student needs but additional reasons were clearly related to the type of centre and awarding body approval. FE Colleges and BTEC centres were influenced by Government policy to replace existing qualifications whilst Schools and Sixth Form Colleges wanted to provide a much needed alternative to A levels and bridge the divide between GCSE and A level as opposed to any academic/vocational divide. The overall picture was of a widening academic/vocational divide. GNVQs did not entirely replace GCSEs and there was strong evidence to suggest that the resit culture still existed to some extent. Most centres had their own approval and there was little evidence of collaborative arrangements. Increasing levels of participation and attainment, one of the major Government aims, appeared to be largely irrelevant at institutional level.

There was a definite division in the popularity of vocational areas with Major and Minor leagues emerging. This research confirmed that the popularity of GNVQs was also dependent on the type of centre (FEU, 1994b). The most popular GNVQs were arts biased with a definite move away from the

more traditional subject areas to those that cover broad vocational areas. These programmes may have filled a gap where there were no relevant qualifications but this did not explain the popularity of GNVQ Business when Business Studies A level was available as an alternative. The categories for Major and Minor league GNVQs will be used in later analysis to ascertain if there were any further similarities or differences between vocational areas.

The vast majority of GNVQs were offered as full-time courses and were aligned with academic courses. FE Colleges offered a broad range of vocational areas and a range of levels alongside other vocational courses. Schools and Sixth Form Colleges offered Major league GNVQs at restricted levels alongside academic qualifications. This created a division in provision. Although more centres offered both Intermediate and Advanced level if schools continued to offer limited access to a limited range of GNVQs then students encouraged to remain at school faced a limited choice which in turn restricted subsequent career choices. The high number of Schools approved as centres, and their inability to expand programmes to include the whole range of GNVQs, would create an imbalance of provision regionally and nationally with numbers taking Minor league GNVQs being restricted. The negative image of Foundation level may have contributed to the reluctance of centres to offer this level. Competition between centres may have contributed to the limited range of programmes offered. As previous vocational experience increased the vocational areas and levels offered and the reasons for introducing GNVQs varied.

Although post-16 centres needed to attract, motivate and keep students, uncontrolled access to courses led to confusion and chaos (Stanton, 1992) with students being placed on the wrong level (Green and Ainley, 1995). Centres were encouraged to consider a range of evidence of achievement for entry and use entry requirements that were neither too rigid or too restrictive (NCVQ et al, 1995) but this research found that centres did not implement this advice in specifying their entry requirements. As the level of GNVQ increased there was a tendency for centres to be more specific in their entry requirements and to adhere to recommendations. However, even at Advanced level this only amounted to slightly more than half of the centres in the sample. Attitudes towards the actual

application of these requirements may have varied but the research did not establish the degree to which the requirements were enforced. Lower entry requirements could have been linked to the pilot or introductory phase of programmes as centres attempted to attract viable group numbers. As the number of centres offering a vocational area increased there were more likely to be variations in entry requirements. Foundation level was targeted at poor/non-achievers and, in some instances, those with special needs, and was a negative choice. The target for Intermediate level was unclear but largely included those with a range of GCSE results. The absence of Foundation level led to increased ambiguity in the entry requirements for Intermediate level. Advanced level appeared to be targeted at non-A level students who had reasonable GCSE results.

Centres had a range of GNVQ and previous vocational experience. This experience was influential, leading to a greater range of vocational areas and levels being offered, greater stability of programmes and increased implementation of recommendations and requirements. These findings influenced the increased use of the total previous vocational experience in analysing the remaining data.

There were some differences between awarding bodies. Centres approved by BTEC and City & Guilds were more highly influenced by Government policy which affected their reasons for introducing GNVQs. City & Guilds had more centres with less GNVQ experience which may have indicated that centres were starting to move from DVE to GNVQ even though this course had not yet been designated for removal. However, unlike GNVQ, DVE was not to be included in league tables.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF GNVQS

Introduction

In this chapter the data from the survey is used to examine the roles and responsibilities of the respondents, the lead-in time prior to the introduction of GNVQs, how staff induction was managed and whether there were any differences in these areas related to different centres or awarding bodies and/or previous GNVQ and other vocational experience. Requirements for staff roles and responsibilities for GNVQs were issued during the pilot phase (NCVQ, 1993b and c). The Quality Framework sought to rationalise these requirements and guide centres to a standard approach to a management, delivery and assessment structure by defining quality assurance procedures and roles. As a result of previous findings (FEFC, 1994; FEU, 1994b) there was a requirement that, responsibility for the overall management and quality assurance was located at a senior level in an institution (NCVQ et al, 1995). Senior managers had the authority to effect change, assist with planning and support staff morale (Ofsted, 1994). Staff in all types of centres agreed that programmes of staff development¹ were necessary for the introduction of GNVQ and briefing sessions were valuable, but there was little evidence of significant planning for the introduction of GNVQs (ED, 1992; FEU, 1993; FEU, 1994b). This poor preparation and planning resulted in poor standards of delivery (Ofsted, 1994). Once the first year of the pilot phase had been completed there should have been little reason for further hurried introduction of GNVQs in centres.

¹ Staff development was a priority when any curriculum change was taking place (Brandes and Ginnis, 1986). The introduction of TVEI required extensive in-service training that covered materials, course construction, teaching strategies, learning approaches and assessment (DES, 1991).

GNVQ roles and responsibilities

The GNVQ roles of the respondents are noted in Table 5.1 which shows that the main roles within GNVQ were well represented in the responses. Most respondents were centre co-ordinators, confirming that the majority of questionnaires were completed by the addressee. A third of the respondents had one role within the centre structure with just over a quarter being exclusively centre co-ordinators. The remaining respondents were centre co-ordinators who had a number of roles². A third of the respondents had all the roles noted on the questionnaire and over half had some combination of three of the roles. Combining roles was not a simple matter. The roles of centre co-ordinator and internal verifier were often combined showing a strong link between these functions.

Table 5.1

GNVQ status and roles of the respondents

GNVQ status and roles	N	%
Centre Co-ordinator & Programme Co-ordinator & Internal verifier & Assessor	99	33.1
Centre Co-ordinator	80	26.7
Centre Co-ordinator & Internal verifier & Assessor	52	17.4
Centre Co-ordinator & Internal verifier	28	9.4
Other combinations	23	7.7
Centre Co-ordinator & Assessor	8	2.7
Programme Co-ordinator	4	1.3
Internal verifier	3	1.0
No response	2	0.7
Total	299	100.0

The role of programme co-ordinator was most likely to be combined with that of centre co-ordinator and over forty per cent of the respondents had this role. This role required direct involvement with the

² Sims (1994) found that whilst Heads of Faculty or the equivalent oversaw the pilot phase of the Built Environment including controlling resources, ultimately they delegated the day to day coordination and management to other experienced staff.

management, delivery and assessment of individual GNVQ programmes. Two thirds of the respondents were Internal verifiers, responsible for the quality assurance of programmes. This would provide them with an overall picture of what happened during delivery and assessment. Over half of the respondents had an assessment role giving them direct contact with students and involvement with the specifications.

General management responsibilities in GNVQ centres

The respondents also had a range of non-GNVQ roles in their centres. Some respondents had more than one management role (for example, Head of Department and Senior Teacher). These are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Non- GNVQ status of the respondents

Non-GNVQ status	N	%
Other	154	47.8
Head of Department	134	41.6
Deputy or Vice-principal	34	10.6
Total	322	100.0

Nearly all Other roles were middle or senior management. Only a small number were teachers or lecturers. Senior managers would be expected to have some influence on resources and curriculum planning, and be able to offer support to staff. Heads of Department would have reasonably senior status within their centre although they may have lacked access to resources outside their own departmental needs, have a lesser role in policy and curriculum decision making and, potentially, have been unable to implement some aspects of the Quality Framework through lack of status or power. Some respondents noted that their role of GNVQ co-ordinator or Head of GNVQ was regarded as a responsibility, and had status, in its own right within the overall management structure of the centre.

Lead-in time and preparation prior to recruiting the first students

Staff and curriculum development were recommended as essential (NCVQ et al, 1995) but no timescales for introducing GNVQs were specified, allowing individual centres to determine their own needs and how they would be met. Respondents were asked how long it was between taking the decision to introduce GNVQs and the admission of the first students, referred to in this research as the lead-in time. Table 5.3 shows that the lead-in time varied between centres. More than half of the centres had seven months or more, what could be seen as a reasonable amount of time, between taking the decision to introduce GNVQs and recruiting the first students.

Table 5.3

Lead-in time prior to the introduction of GNVQs

Lead-in time	N	%
0 - 3 months	28	9.4
4 - 6 months	68	22.7
7 - 10 months	100	33.4
11 months or more	92	30.8
No response	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

Staff induction

Inductions have a number of important principles. They are usually spread over a period of time (several days or weeks), follow a systematic pattern and, provide written information. As GNVQs represented a new and complex departure for centres (Spours, 1995b) it was important that staff were properly prepared for their introduction. This was not always the case and awarding bodies expressed concern about staff training³. Previous research found that the best staff inductions took place during the year prior to the introduction of GNVQ but the majority of School inductions were inadequate with curriculum planning occurring during the delivery of the programmes (Ofsted, 1994). Latterly, it

³ This was noted as an implementation issue for external verifiers (NCVQ, 1993e).

took approximately a year to train teachers and assessors and to create the infrastructure to deliver GNVQs (Arkin, 1994b).

The basic structure and management of staff inductions

Staff should have received formal inductions (NCVQ et al, 1995). Several key aspects of induction were included in the questionnaire. Centres were asked about the formality of induction, the use of materials, how induction was managed and the different approaches used, when the induction took place and how long it lasted. Table 5.4 shows how formal and informal approaches were used in staff inductions. Three quarters of centres had either a formal induction or one that contained some formal aspects. A quarter of centres had either no induction or a completely informal induction which would probably result in inadequate preparation for staff delivering GNVQs.

Table 5.4

The formality of staff induction

Formality of induction	N	%
Formal induction	114	38.1
Both formal and informal	108	36.1
Informal induction	66	22.1
No induction	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

Table 5.5 shows that more than half of the centres did not have specific materials to use in their induction⁴ leaving them dependent on ensuring the same staff were available for delivery to ensure consistent preparation of other staff. This lack of materials may have affected the standardisation of approaches and information included in the induction. As GNVQ was very complex staff would have needed some reference materials to use after the induction.

⁴ This may be related to the lack of materials produced either by awarding bodies, NCVQ or support agencies such as the FEU.

Table 5.5

The use of materials in staff induction

Materials	N	%
No materials	166	55.5
Materials used	133	44.5
Total	299	100.0

Nearly half the centres offered a course specific staff induction and just under a quarter offered both a course specific and whole centre induction (Table 5.6). Staff needed to familiarise themselves with the specifications and course materials for their own vocational area but a third of the centres did not provide this opportunity through a course specific induction. Whole centre approaches would have provided the opportunity to standardise understanding of, and approaches to, specific aspects of GNVQ such as the grading criteria and key skills. The lack of whole centre approaches could have been the starting point for what were seen as the emerging differences between vocational areas. Nearly a fifth of centres had no specific approach to induction.

Table 5.6

Approaches to staff induction

Approach	N	%
Course specific	146	48.8
Both	68	22.7
None	53	17.8
Whole centre	32	10.7
Total	299	100.0

Staff should have received group inductions in order to ensure continuity (NCVQ et al, 1995). Table 5.7 shows that centres were most likely to combine group and individual aspects of induction with just over one third of them favouring group inductions alone and forty per cent offering some group approaches in combination with individual work.

Table 5.7

Group and individual approaches in staff induction

Approach	N	%
Combination	119	39.8
Group	107	35.8
None	44	14.7
Individual	28	9.4
Other	1	0.3
Total	299	100.0

Centres were asked to note when staff induction took place (Table 5.8). Nearly half the centres had a rolling programme of induction. There were four possible explanations for the prevalence of rolling induction. Firstly, the last minute recruitment of staff when student recruitment had exceeded expectations would have created a need for different induction times. Secondly, the ongoing changes to specifications, assessment requirements and methods had created the need for ongoing staff training and this may have been regarded as induction to new aspects for existing staff. Thirdly, it was very difficult to complete staff induction in a few sessions and at a specific time of the year. Many issues and training needs only arose as staff became involved in these complex programmes and rolling inductions would have facilitated these needs. Finally, centres using staff development time that was allocated on a termly basis would be restricted in how GNVQ staff induction could be accommodated.

Table 5.8

The timing of staff induction

Timing	N	%
Rolling	145	48.5
Combination	53	17.7
None	46	15.4
Summer	44	14.7
Autumn	11	3.7
Total	299	100.0

The length of staff induction was probably one of the most important aspects to consider. More than thirteen hours were needed for an effective staff induction (NCVQ et al, 1995). Table 5.9 shows that the majority of staff received inadequate induction in terms of the time allowed for this process. As the majority of inductions were ‘rolling’ it may have been difficult for staff to estimate the true length of staff induction and this may have affected the response. However, if this was an accurate response, the effectiveness of these short inductions was questionable if offered in a rolling schedule. These results showed that the lack of time allowed for induction was widespread.

Table 5.9

The length of staff induction

Length	N	%
None	19	6.4
1 - 5 hours	99	33.1
6 - 12 hours	79	26.4
13 hours or more	102	34.1
Total	299	100.0

The management of the introduction of GNVQs in different types of centre

Different types of centre managed the introduction of GNVQs using a variety of approaches. Lead-in time varied between different types of centres (Appendix 5.1). Sixth Form Colleges had much longer lead-in times than other centres. FE Colleges and Other Institutions had the shortest lead-in times, with the latter also having the broadest range of lead-in times.

The combination of GNVQ staff roles was affected by the number of Schools in the sample but nevertheless three models of how GNVQ staff responsibilities were delegated emerged from the data (Appendix 5.2). Model one, the centre co-ordinator (Table 5.10) was by far the most popular with FE Colleges and Other Institutions. This model probably reflected how management responsibilities were delegated to more senior staff in these centres who, by the very nature of their other responsibilities had little direct contact with students and therefore were unlikely to have other roles within the

GNVQ structure. As these centres offered more vocational areas and levels it appeared sensible that centre co-ordinators focused entirely on this role. This model was also the most popular with Sixth Form Colleges.

Table 5.10

Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model One

Centre Co-ordinator		
	Respondents	
Popularity by centre type	N	% of all centre types
FE Colleges	20	50.0
Other	8	42.0
Sixth Form Colleges	7	36.4
Schools	45	20.4

The second model, combining the roles of centre co-ordinator, internal verifier and assessor (Table 5.11) was more popular with Schools, although this model was the least popular across all types of centre.

Table 5.11

Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model Two

Centre Co-ordinator, Internal verifier and Assessor		
	Respondents	
Popularity by centre type	N	% of all centre types
Other	4	21.1
Schools	40	18.1
Sixth Form Colleges	3	15.8
FE Colleges	5	12.5

Model three, combining the roles of centre co-ordinator, programme co-ordinator, internal verifier and assessor (Table 5.12) was far less likely to be used in FE Colleges. As the number of roles rose,

the model became more popular with Schools. A School may have preferred to have a centre co-ordinator who, by the nature of their job description, co-ordinated and internally verified all GNVQ programmes. This may have been particularly useful if the number of programmes and levels offered was restricted and the total number of students low.

Table 5.12

Preferred staff roles in different centres - Model Three

Centre Co-ordinator, Programme Co-ordinator, Internal verifier and Assessor		
	Respondents	
Popularity by centre type	N	% of centre types
Schools	88	39.8
Other	5	26.3
Sixth Form Colleges	4	21.1
FE Colleges	2	5.0

Within the third model there was the potential for staff workloads to be very high, particularly in Schools and, to a lesser extent, Sixth Form Colleges. Irrespective of the number of students on each programme or the number of programmes offered at a centre, there were several tasks related to each role (NCVQ et al, 1995). If this was added to the variables of number of students, number of programmes and length of programmes, then it can be seen that many respondents had complex and time consuming work schedules. It is not surprising that teachers felt they did not have sufficient time to carry out all of their duties adequately (Tomlinson, 1995). When the demands of the perpetual changes within GNVQ were seen in the context of the overall workload of staff implementing them, it was easy to understand why changes received negative feedback, were difficult to implement, slow to be implemented and alienated other staff (particularly in schools, where there must have been a ‘knock on effect’ of increased workloads).

The management of staff induction also varied according to centre type (Appendix 5.3). Schools were most likely to have formal approaches whereas Sixth Form and FE Colleges were most likely to have a combination of formal and informal approaches. FE Colleges were more likely than Sixth Form Colleges to have a formal induction alone. Overall, where centres were less likely to have completely formal inductions they were less likely to have a completely informal inductions. These centres had developed a combined approach.

Sixth Form Colleges were much less likely to have a course specific induction and more likely to combine whole centre and course specific aspects (Appendix 5.4). In contrast, FE Colleges were fairly equally divided between those who offered a course specific induction only and those who offered both. This probably reflected the internal structure of the centres. Whole centre approaches were not popular in any centre and even less so in FE Colleges. This may have prevented good practice being cascaded from one vocational area to another, which was essential for standardising common aspects of GNVQ.

Different centres also had different arrangements for how staff were grouped for induction. FE Colleges were much more likely to have group based inductions and less likely to combine group and individual approaches (Appendix 5.5). They favoured a rolling induction or combination of times. This probably reflected their need to cater for full-time, part-time and sessional employment patterns. They were also most likely to have inductions of twelve hours or less. Schools were more likely to offer group or combined approaches to the induction and to have a Summer induction (Appendix 5.6). This was probably related to the additional time available for such activities once examination groups had completed their courses⁵. They were much less likely to use materials as part of their staff induction (Appendix 5.7). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to offer combinations of group and individual approaches and had the longest inductions (Appendix 5.8). They preferred rolling inductions or offered combinations of times. Other Institutions preferred combined inductions and

⁵ In FE Colleges and Other Institutions part-time and sessional staff may not be contracted during the Summer term.

were the most likely to have an induction that lasted longer than twelve hours.

The influence of awarding body approval

Awarding body approval affected staff induction to a lesser extent than centre type. RSAEB centres were most likely to have a lead-in of sixth months or less (Appendix 5.9). These centres were almost twice as likely as other centres to have no induction but the inductions they did offer were most likely to be formal and least likely to be informal (Appendix 5.10). They were also the least likely to use materials for their induction (Appendix 5.11). The level of use of materials could have been indicative of the availability of materials from awarding bodies. These centres were most likely to have the longest inductions (Appendix 5.12) and, in this respect, adhered most closely to the Quality Framework requirements.

Some BTEC centres and those with Multiple approvals had longer lead-in times but were most likely to have inductions of 1-5 hours. They were most likely to combine group and individual approaches (Appendix 5.13). BTEC centres were the most likely to have no specific time for induction and least likely to have combinations of timings (Appendix 5.14). It is possible that their inductions took place in the Spring and therefore were not noted in the response.

City & Guilds centres and those with Multiple approvals were most likely to have course specific inductions (Appendix 5.15). They were twice as likely to have individual aspects to their induction and most likely to have rolling inductions. Centres with Multiple approvals were much more likely to have group inductions. Whilst it was not clear if these groups were based around single awarding bodies or comprised a mixture of awarding bodies, this was particularly interesting in view of the alleged differences between awarding bodies (Ofsted, 1994).

The influence of GNVQ and previous vocational experience

As previous vocational experience increased centres were more likely to combine formal and informal aspects of induction (Appendix 5.16). Less experienced centres were more likely to have formal inductions. Experienced centres were far less likely to have informal inductions, use materials for induction (Appendix 5.17), have group inductions (Appendix 5.18) or offer an induction lasting longer than six hours (Appendix 5.19). This could have been the result of increased familiarity with some of the processes and aspects of GNVQ taken from previous courses which led to increased confidence and/or initial understanding.

More experienced centres were less likely to focus on an informal induction or schedule induction for the Autumn, although the timing of the induction became less predictable with no pattern emerging (Appendix 5.20). The use of informal inductions alone decreased sharply as experience increased. The use of both types of induction rose steadily as the previous experience of the centre increased.

If ‘Own approval status’ is examined it can be seen that those with less experience were more likely to have a lead-in time of longer than eleven months (Appendix 5.21). Newer centres were obviously taking the decision to introduce GNVQs much earlier prior to the admission of the first students. Older centres had a broad range of lead-in times from four to eleven plus months but there were not as many centres with really short lead-in times as would have been anticipated with such a ‘hurried’ introduction in 1992. Those with franchise or consortium experience had a similar range of lead-in times to newer centres.

As a centre’s own approval experience increased they were more likely to use course specific inductions (Appendix 5.22) and offer a combination of group and individual approaches (Appendix 5.23). They were less likely to use formal inductions (Appendix 5.24), use group inductions alone or offer a Summer induction (Appendix 5.25). The use of materials for staff induction appeared to plateau at two to three years or more of own approval experience (Appendix 5.26). Centres in

franchise or consortium arrangements were much less likely to use materials even when compared to the newest centres. This lack of reference to materials would have rendered staff highly dependent on good quality communication systems between centres and staff within the consortium or franchise. Centres with consortium or franchise experience generally followed a similar pattern to the less experienced centres. They were most likely to offer both formal and informal inductions. This approach may have been influenced by the structure of the consortium or franchise arrangement.

The newest centres and those with Other approval experience were most likely to have the longest inductions (Appendix 5.27). As own approval experience rose centres were less likely to offer an induction of thirteen or more hours, the use of inductions of less than twelve hours rising. This may have been related to a reduction in the need for induction as staff teams stabilised. However, new staff would still need access to the full induction programme and therefore there should have been little change to the actual length of induction.

The influence of vocational areas offered

The Major league GNVQs all had a similar pattern for lead-in times (Appendix 5.28). However, Minor league GNVQs were more likely to have shorter lead-in times (Appendix 5.29) with Information Technology centres having the greatest spread of lead-in times. Although this was a relatively new vocational area the schedule for introduction had been known for some time and centres should have been able to anticipate and plan for the introduction. Whilst some centres would have been adding these programmes to their current range, the staff involved would probably have been new to GNVQ and therefore needed preparation and planning time.

Examining staff inductions by vocational areas it could be seen that Leisure and Tourism, Science, Engineering and Manufacturing had more variations in their inductions compared to other vocational areas. These differences varied according to each aspect. They showed that, with the exception of Leisure and Tourism, Minor league GNVQs had more variations in their provision. Leisure and

Tourism was most likely to have a whole centre approach to induction and more likely to provide a Summer induction for staff (Appendix 5.30 - 5.33). This may have reflected the composition of the delivery teams for these programmes, using staff from various departments or subject areas for delivery. Manufacturing were most likely to have group inductions and more likely to have a shorter staff induction (Appendix 5.34 - 5.37). They were far less likely to combine group and individual aspects. Engineering were most likely to have group inductions and far less likely to have a course specific induction, combine group and individual aspects or use materials for their staff induction (Appendix 5.30 - 5.39). Science were the least likely to have formal inductions (Appendix 5.40 and 5.41).

The influence of lead-in time

Longer lead-in time resulted in greater consistency of entry requirements between vocational areas (Appendix 5.42). Shorter lead-in times may have led to a lack of co-ordination and time to standardise between vocational areas with staff forced to make decisions about recruitment in isolation. The longer the lead-in time the more likely a centre was to have an induction, combine formal and informal approaches, offer more course specific inductions and have a longer induction (Appendix 5.43 - 5.45). A very short lead-in resulted in less use of whole centre approaches and a higher risk of no induction being offered, giving the impression that staff induction was dealt with hurriedly. Group inductions were much less likely to be used by centres with the shortest lead-in time (Appendix 5.46). In these centres it appeared that staff were increasingly dealt with on an individual basis. Lead-in time did not appear to affect the use of materials or the timing of the induction (Appendix 5.47 and 5.48).

Summary of the management of the introduction

There appeared to be an optimum lead-in time of seven to ten months which resulted in centres being more likely to adopt approaches which were nearer to the good practice described in the Quality Framework although this still left many centres some way from the full implementation of

recommendations or requirements. The majority of centres had more than six months between taking the decision to introduce GNVQs and admitting the first students. New centres had heeded advice and guidance by ensuring a longer lead-in time prior to courses commencing. The longer lead-in time may have been the result of a faster, more refined approval processes implemented by the awarding bodies. The more experienced a centre the less lead-in time they needed to implement further changes or introduce new programmes.

Over half of the centres provided inadequate induction as defined by the Quality Framework and a quarter of the centres had no induction indicating that the majority of staff were ill-prepared for GNVQ. The poor preparation of staff had the potential to affect the delivery and assessment of programmes. As a result, activities that should have been included in the lead-in and induction would have been pushed into the course delivery time or omitted altogether. This loss of training and preparation could never be redeemed once the programmes had commenced. The complex roles undertaken by staff in Schools and Sixth Form Colleges would magnify any problems resulting from poor preparation. If inductions were spread over a period of time and were largely less than twelve hours they would have been less effective.

In some instances centres appeared to reach a plateau in their provision with little or no change or improvement being seen after their second or third year as an approved centre. This indicated that centres may only have had a certain potential or capacity to implement requirements. After this point either resources were directed elsewhere, not available or aspects of induction or different approaches were simply not seen as important (due to the level of implementation or success achieved with the current provision) or the centre structures prevented further development. The constraints of timetabling may have affected a centre's ability to deliver staff training and this, coupled with the increased investment required for courses and materials (Nicholls, 1995), may have reduced the ability of centres to offer adequate staff training and preparation⁶. There were differences between

⁶ This may explain why Part One centres received more positive reports regarding staff training as part of the funding available for centres could be used for this purpose.

awarding bodies with RSAEB centres displaying greater variability compared to other awarding bodies even though they had the longest induction times. BTEC and City & Guilds centres and centres with Multiple approvals all had some common characteristics (e.g. use of course specific and rolling induction).

As centre experience rose (either previous vocational or GNVQ approval experience) centres adopted a less formal approach to induction. The overall nature of the inductions changed as experience increased. Centres were more likely to cater for individual courses and use materials. The increased use of materials would probably have resulted from the increased availability of information and materials from awarding bodies or other agencies that occurred at this time. Differences in staff induction between vocational areas may have been the source of the problems identified with delivery and assessment. Leisure and Tourism was the most criticised of the Major league GNVQs and, along with the Minor league GNVQs, had some distinct differences in how staff were inducted. Combinations of less previous vocational and GNVQ experience, franchise or consortium arrangements and Minor league vocational areas resulted in extreme examples of poor preparation that may subsequently have affected the delivery and assessment of these programmes.

A mixture of approaches was used in the inductions offered by different centres. Colleges appeared to have a range of approaches that matched a number of the Quality Framework requirements but these inductions were shorter. The management of staff induction appeared to be largely influenced by institutional structure. Whatever the requirements of codes of practice or good practice guidelines they could not influence centres to change their entire approach to the management and training of staff. GNVQ requirements were adapted to fit into the existing structures and, beyond a certain point, did not result in institutional change. Centres with more previous vocational experience may have used existing centre structures and approaches to deliver induction. This enabled them to achieve a closer match to the Quality Framework compared to less experienced centres. This may also have been indicative of the number of common aspects adopted from previous courses.

There was some evidence that the length of induction and approaches used had stabilised. However, the research found that there were still a broad range of approaches irrespective of the requirements and good practice identified. This was probably the start of the lack of standardisation that led further implementation issues.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GNVQ CURRICULUM

Introduction

The curriculum is the full range of student experiences from the moment of entry to the institution through to the exit and after care services. The GNVQ curriculum consisted of a specific GNVQ induction, the delivery of the programmes and the exit phase. Approved centres were required to provide specific content and use specific approaches (NCVQ et al, 1995). In this chapter the data from the survey is used to examine how student induction was managed, how the programmes were delivered and the provision for student progression at the end of programmes.

Student induction

The role of student induction in ensuring successful completions of courses has been increasingly emphasized over the last two decades. Good quality induction was seen as a key part of an effective GNVQ programme. The belief was that good quality induction would enable students to select appropriate courses at the right level and thereby reduce the potential for drop-out as students struggled or became disillusioned with a course¹. Whilst induction was regarded as important in GNVQ, the ongoing changes and assessment requirements appeared to largely overwhelm the systematic planning, development and implementation of this aspect. The combination of complex materials (Ofsted, 1994), intricate assessment requirements and a lack of staff training detracted attention from the quality of student induction. As early as 1993 schools and colleges had identified induction as one of three management issues (ED, 1993)² to emerge from GNVQ. In response, centres were asked to provide induction programmes for potential students, to acquaint them with the

¹ At 17 years of age there was a sharp drop-out from both academic and vocational courses (Sutton, 1994).

² The other two were the use of APL, and guidance, both constituent parts of the induction process.

qualification, type of work required and the range of units offered (NCVQ, 1993a and b)³. By the time this advice was received in centres most had already planned and completed the recruitment of their students for that academic year. By 1993 further information and guidance on inductions, initial assessment and individual action planning requirements were issued by awarding bodies. By 1994/95 many centres were forced to write their own information and materials, and induction was found to be very variable (Sims, 1994)⁴. The competition between centres had an effect on how GNVQ was ‘sold’ to students and the information they were given to attract them to the courses offered in different centres.

How inductions were offered

Respondents were asked to note all the ways in which student inductions were delivered within their centre. Table 6.1 shows that inductions were offered in complex packages and a great variety of management approaches were used⁵. Most centres had separate GNVQ inductions and these were offered alongside inductions for other courses and induction to the centre in general.

Table 6.1

Description of student inductions

Type of Induction	N	%
GNVQ only	66	22.0
Separate GNVQ & General	65	21.7
Separate GNVQ, General, Other course and some combined elements	36	12.1
Combined	33	11.1
None	8	2.7
All others	91	30.4
Total	299	100.0

³ In 1996 induction became an absolute requirement as part of the centre approval requirements (NCVQ et al, 1996). The Common Criteria were introduced in order to ‘level the playing field’ and decrease any disparities between the awarding bodies. However, aspects of the criteria were not new to the centres and it is fair to say that, in some respects, the Common Criteria pulled together the current thinking on what was required from all centres and awarding bodies and used the Quality Framework requirements in a very specific way.

⁴ Many centres included the initial information provided for students as part of their induction process. This would encompass the marketing strategies used by centres which include advertising in the local press, college/school open evenings, face to face contact with existing students and careers evenings (Sims, 1994).

⁵ Of greater concern was the variety of inductions offered overall, with the category for ‘All others’ including a total of eight variations on how GNVQ induction was offered in conjunction with other courses and how aspects were combined.

Student admission pattern

GNVQ programmes were designed to be flexible and allow variations in enrollment (FEFC, 1994). This may have been part of the GNVQ philosophy but initial reports showed that GNVQs were being taught across the academic year following traditional patterns of enrollment and delivery (ED, 1993). Table 6.2 shows that the vast majority of centres admitted students in either August or September. A few centres admitted students throughout the year showing that there was some flexibility in the provision.

Table 6.2

Admission pattern for students

Admission time	N	%
August/September	277	85.8
Rolling	46	14.2
Total	323	100.0

The timing of induction

The timing of induction had varied since the start of GNVQ in 1992 but generally reflected academic patterns of admission (ED, 1993). The current research shows that this pattern continued. Very few centres offered termly inductions with the majority taking place at the start of the academic year (Table 6.3). A quarter of the centres offered inductions before the start of the academic year. This was probably a reflection of the number of schools in the sample. Students who transferred from one centre to another or joined a centre after the start of the academic year were highly likely to miss the induction.

Table 6.3

Timing of student induction

Time	N	%
Before the start of the academic year	95	25.1
At the start of the academic year	264	69.8
Termly	19	5.1
Total	378	100.0

How inductions were managed

Centres should have provided a formal, GNVQ specific induction (NCVQ et al, 1995). Centres had already provided information on the management of their staff induction and were asked to provide similar information on their student induction. This included information on the formality, focus and grouping of inductions (Table 6.4). The majority of centres had formal inductions. Some centres also used informal approaches. The majority of inductions were course specific. Similar numbers of centres had whole centre inductions and department based inductions. Whilst the majority of centres had group inductions a quarter of centres had individual aspects to their inductions.

Table 6.4

The management of student induction

Selection	Selected		Not selected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Management approach						
Formal induction	248	82.9	51	17.1	299	100.0
Informal induction	103	34.4	196	65.6	299	100.0
Whole centre	136	45.5	163	54.5	299	100.0
Department based	148	49.5	151	50.5	299	100.0
Course specific	214	71.6	85	28.4	299	100.0
Group	202	67.6	97	32.4	299	100.0
Individual	76	25.4	223	74.6	299	100.0
Other	5	1.7	294	98.3	299	100.0

The length of induction

Inductions could vary in length from a few days to many weeks but there should have been a formal, GNVQ specific induction that lasted from two to four weeks (NCVQ et al, 1995)⁶. The length of the induction offered by a centre was not simply a matter of meeting the minimum recommendations. An induction that only lasted one to five days left little time at the start of the programme for a student to act upon their GCSE results, make informed decisions about the level of qualification they would study or the centre they would attend. Centres were asked to provide information on both their

⁶ The Quality Framework noted that it was unlikely that induction could be carried out effectively in a shorter period.

GNVQ specific induction and any other induction that was provided for students. Table 6.5 shows that most centres had a GNVQ induction of ten days or less. Just under half of the centres specified separate time for the induction programmes for other courses. The majority of centres noted that other inductions lasted from one to five days.

Table 6.5

Length of student induction (in days)

Length in days	N	%
GNVQ induction 1 to 5 days	142	47.5
GNVQ induction 6 to 10 days	74	24.7
GNVQ induction 11 to 15 days	36	12.0
GNVQ induction 16 to 20 days	11	3.7
GNVQ induction 21 or more days	31	10.4
No GNVQ induction	5	1.6
Total	299	100.0
Length in days		
Other induction 1 to 5 days	113	37.8
Other induction 6 to 10 days	17	5.7
Other induction 11 to 15 days	4	1.3
Other induction 16 to 20 days	2	0.7
Other induction 21 or more days	6	2.0
No Other induction	157	52.5
Total	299	100.0

Activities included in the student induction

Inductions had already been found to be variable in both content and balance (FEFC, 1994; Sims, 1994). Well planned inductions resulted in well prepared students who settled into programmes quickly (FEFC, 1994). Centres were asked to indicate which activities were included in their induction, how highly they were featured and how easy or difficult they were to achieve in the induction. In order to show the links between specific types of induction activities they were subsequently grouped to illustrate how GNVQ specific activities, assessment activities, advice and guidance, selection processes and familiarisation activities were included.

A good, structured induction should have addressed all the main aspects of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods, activities and assessment demands of the programmes (NCVQ et al, 1995). Many of these activities continued into the course making it hard to see where induction ended and the course began. Staff acknowledged that induction could be improved by providing more information on the philosophy and content of GNVQ but wanted to guard against overloading students with this type of information (Sims, 1994). Some aspects of GNVQ were similar to other programmes and to developments in learning that were already introduced to all students post-16 with varying degrees of success. Even pilot centres acknowledged that most students would find GNVQ structures and approaches different to their previous experience of courses (ED, 1993). Students were motivated by their interest in the vocational and needed to be introduced to vocational activities as soon as possible in their induction via carefully designed activities that could encompass or include most other aspects of the induction and be the backbone of an induction programme (NCVQ et al, 1995). Some inductions developed the idea of taster activities to include short residential periods (FEFC, 1994). The terms and language of GNVQs had to be introduced during the induction as students needed to gain an initial understanding of the structure of GNVQ and how it was presented. Early development of key skills was fundamental to success in GNVQ (NCVQ et al, 1995). Colleges had already acknowledged that the introduction of GNVQs required better learner support systems, particularly to develop key skills at the required level (FEU, 1993).

Action planning had been identified as a key feature in the process of developing self-motivated, autonomous learners (Crombie White et al, 1995). Students should have engaged in planning and reviewing from an early stage, taken an active part in their own learning by carrying out initial planning and reviewing for assessment, set short-term learning targets and planned for activities and assignments (NCVQ et al, 1995). Action planning was a core skill process and central to the management of student learning (ED, 1993). Early research showed that the majority of school students produced action plans for target setting and reviewing coursework but most admitted these activities needed further development (Ofsted, 1994). The self-supported study promoted in GNVQ required teachers to adopt a different style of teaching (Crombie White et al, 1995). It also required a

lot of planning and preparation, resources, technology and staff development. Students needed to develop study skills, including time management and gathering evidence (Sims, 1994). These skills were clearly related to the grading criteria.

This research found that the number of activities that each centre included either highly or very highly was large considering the length of time allocated to the induction. Table 6.6 shows that GNVQ specific aspects were all highly featured in the induction although taster activities and trips and visits were less of a priority. Study skills and grading criteria were included to a similar extent. This may be due to the relationship between these two aspects. For example, research skills were required for Information Seeking and Handling.

Table 6.6

GNVQ specific activities included in the student induction

GNVQ activity	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Action planning	269	90.0	18	6.0	15	4.0	299	100.0
Introduction to terms and language	270	90.3	18	6.0	11	3.7	299	100.0
Introduction to key skills	260	86.9	29	9.7	10	3.4	299	100.0
Introduction to grading	222	74.2	67	22.4	10	3.4	299	100.0
Study skills	216	72.2	68	22.7	15	5.1	299	100.0
Taster activities	178	59.5	104	34.8	17	5.7	299	100.0
Trips and visits	138	46.1	144	48.2	17	5.7	299	100.0

Table 6.7 shows that the GNVQ specific activities were amongst the most difficult for centres to achieve. The more GNVQ specific the activity the less likely it was that centres had previous experience of the activity. This may have influenced the degree of difficulty experienced in achieving a satisfactory level of introduction in the induction programme. Centres found it easier to introduce study skills compared to the grading criteria. Previously, centres had been found to grade in a variety of ways, both in their actual and perceived practice (ED, 1994) which could have stemmed from or be related to the difficulties they experienced in introducing the grading themes.

Table 6.7

Ease of introducing GNVQ specific activities in the student induction

GNVQ activity	Easy or very easy to achieve		Difficult or very difficult to achieve		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Action planning	147	49.2	119	39.8	33	11.0	299	100.0
Introduction to terms and language	140	46.8	130	43.5	29	9.7	299	100.0
Introduction to key skills	158	52.8	107	35.8	34	11.4	299	100.0
Introduction to grading	97	32.4	158	52.8	44	14.8	299	100.0
Study skills	152	50.8	92	30.8	55	18.4	299	100.0
Taster activities	177	59.2	51	17.0	71	23.8	299	100.0
Trips and visits	135	45.1	66	22.1	98	32.8	299	100.0

It was thought that initial vocational activities and assignments could be designed to develop interests, understanding and skills relevant to the vocational area and produce initial assessment evidence for vocational and key skill units, and provide opportunities to practice and bring together the assessment activities (NCVQ et al,1995). Centres were expected to introduce the style of assessment to students and to undertake diagnostic assessment and, where appropriate, use APL (NCVQ et al, 1995). Active or experiential learning was characterised by learning through doing and commonly used assignment led learning and group work similar to that used in TVEI (Crombie White et al, 1995). Previous reports found that the most effective inductions included assignments which introduced the college, encouraged co-operation and developed team work (FEFC, 1994). Assessment information was designed to inform teachers and lecturers about learning, what had and had not been achieved and what was required to move forwards (Crombie White et al,1995). In Schools there was little use of APL (Ofsted, 1994) but some colleges included APL or APA as part of their induction even though there was no formal system (Webb and Shaw, 1994). Initial assessment (during induction) was essential for the development of key skills, enabling students to achieve key skills at the maximum level of which they were capable (Sutton, 1994). By 1994 centres were beginning to screen students for their suitability for courses (Brown, 1994). Table 6.8 shows that assignments were highly featured in the induction but APL and diagnostic assessment were not as highly featured. These assessment activities were less highly featured than most GNVQ specific activities.

Assignments to be submitted in a student’s portfolio were more likely to be featured than practice assignments. This was a sensible strategy as there was little point in wasting potential evidence.

Table 6.8

Assessment activities included in the student induction

Assessment activity	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assignments for portfolio	236	78.9	51	17.0	12	4.1	299	100.0
Practice assignments	202	67.6	84	28.1	13	4.3	299	100.0
Accreditation of Prior Learning	134	44.8	150	50.2	15	5.0	299	100.0
Diagnostic assessment	131	43.8	149	49.8	19	6.4	299	100.0

Table 6.9 shows an interesting difference between practice and portfolio assignments with the latter being more difficult to achieve. In many respects this was indicative of the ongoing problems identified in the assessment process. Not only were APL and diagnostic assessment difficult to achieve but the number of ‘No responses’ rose for these activities.

Table 6.9

Ease of introducing assessment activities in the student induction

Assessment activity	Easy or very easy to achieve		Difficult or very difficult to achieve		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assignments for portfolio	142	47.5	110	36.8	47	15.7	299	100.0
Practice assignments	195	65.2	42	14.0	62	20.8	299	100.0
Accreditation of Prior Learning	80	26.8	124	41.5	95	31.7	299	100.0
Diagnostic assessment	101	33.8	99	33.1	99	33.1	299	100.0

Centres were required to provide advice and guidance for students in order that they could make informed decisions about their courses (NCVQ et al, 1995). GNVQ required substantial focused guidance for decision making prior to the commencement of the programmes but teachers did not always have the expertise or time for these activities (Whiteside, 1994). Tutoring was an important

part of the learner support system that could help prevent students from dropping out of education (Crombie White et al, 1995). Target groups should have been identified and students have access to programmes, selection, and initial planning and to review their career aims, progression targets and overall priorities for the course (NCVQ et al, 1995). Teachers wanted to provide good guidance and counseling across all aspects of provision but acknowledged they needed training for this role (Tomlinson, 1995)⁷. To some extent, the introduction of GNVQ helped centres to review their support systems and provision of guidance (Sutton, 1994) and ensure that students were placed on appropriate courses. Initial reports found that centres did not plan recruitment or selection systems in great detail due to the rapid introduction of GNVQs (FEU, 1993) and that less than half of the students received careers advice from a careers officer and students felt disadvantaged by this lack of guidance (Webb and Shaw, 1994). Colleges provided some advice on employment and qualifications in their induction process (Webb and Shaw, 1994) but others found that whilst students could access information on opportunities in education and work, this information was biased towards HE (Whiteside, 1994). Table 6.10 shows that all aspects of advice and guidance were highly featured but to a slightly lesser extent than the GNVQ specific activities. Advice and guidance on GNVQ programmes and routes was most highly featured.

Table 6.10

Advice and guidance included in the student induction

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
Advice and guidance	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advice and guidance on GNVQ programmes and routes	244	81.6	39	13.0	16	5.4	299	100.0
Initial advice	235	78.6	51	17.0	13	4.4	299	100.0
Introduction to all of the courses	173	57.8	107	35.8	19	6.4	299	100.0

⁷ Guidance and counseling systems were not exclusively for the selection or induction to GNVQ. Systems were required to help students through school and to understand the relationships in the curriculum with further education, training, employment and adult life.

Table 6.11 shows that advice and guidance was much easier to achieve than the GNVQ specific or assessment activities introduced in the induction. Centres were obviously more experienced in these activities.

Table 6.11

Ease of introducing advice and guidance in the student induction

	Easy or very easy to achieve		Difficult or very difficult to achieve		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advice and guidance	223	74.6	33	11.0	43	14.4	299	100.0
Advice and guidance on routes	223	74.6	33	11.0	43	14.4	299	100.0
Initial advice	208	69.6	22	7.3	54	23.1	299	100.0
Introduction to all of the courses	171	57.2	34	11.4	94	31.4	299	100.0

With the increased emphasis on student control, the general construction of a GNVQ and the potential to combine this with other courses there should have been the opportunity for students to make a number of choices at the start of the programmes. Decisions on selection and allocation to vocational area and level should have taken into account a wide range of evidence including prior achievement, student’s interests and motivation, relevant diagnostic assessment, reports from teachers and employers, the amount of individual support students would receive on a course and the likelihood that the students would achieve success on the course (NCVQ et al, 1995). There was already some evidence that students were not given a completely free choice from the optional or additional units available (Sims, 1994)⁸. These decisions were informed by what tutors considered to be relevant to students’ educational and vocational needs as well as what was available.

Table 6.12 shows that initial interviews, course selection and the selection of the vocational area were all highly featured in the induction. Selecting the level or additional units were less likely to be included. Selecting optional units was a very low priority. This could have seriously influenced career choices and student progression⁹. Unless the student was fully aware of what the centre offered there

⁸ This aspect is explored later in this chapter.
⁹ For example, in Health and Social Care there were specific career routes linked to optional units.

was the potential for student dissatisfaction and disaffection with what amounted to a third of their vocational units.

Table 6.12

Selection processes included in the student induction

Selection process	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Course selection	242	80.9	38	12.7	19	6.4	299	100.0
Initial interviews	221	73.9	63	21.1	15	5.0	299	100.0
Selecting vocational area	217	72.6	64	21.4	18	6.0	299	100.0
Selecting vocational level	175	58.5	105	35.1	19	6.4	299	100.0
Selecting additional courses	172	57.5	108	36.1	19	6.4	299	100.0
Selecting optional units	85	28.4	195	65.2	19	6.4	299	100.0

Table 6.13 shows that, whilst centres found most of these selection processes easy to introduce or include, the number of responses to these questions actually fell. This may have been indicative of respondents being less confident in their response to these questions.

Table 6.13

Ease of introducing selection processes in the student induction

Selection process	Easy or very easy to achieve		Difficult or very difficult to achieve		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Course selection	202	67.6	32	10.7	65	21.7	299	100.0
Initial interviews	208	69.6	24	8.0	67	22.4	299	100.0
Selecting vocational area	189	63.2	35	11.7	75	25.1	299	100.0
Selecting vocational level	187	62.5	37	12.4	75	25.1	299	100.0
Selecting additional courses	151	50.5	51	17.0	97	32.5	299	100.0
Selecting optional units	89	29.8	43	14.4	167	55.8	299	100.0

At the start of any new course students needed to familiarise themselves with resources, facilities and other people. Table 6.14 shows that familiarisation activities were less likely to be included in the

induction process compared to GNVQ specific activities. It is possible that the inclusion of these activities was dependent on the type of centre¹⁰.

Table 6.14

Familiarization processes included in the student induction

Familiarization process	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Health and safety issues	133	44.5	144	48.2	22	7.3	299	100.0
Familiarity with staff	185	61.9	96	32.1	18	6.0	299	100.0
Familiarity with peers	202	67.6	83	27.7	14	4.7	299	100.0
Familiarity with services	184	61.5	99	33.1	16	5.4	299	100.0
Familiarity with layout	118	39.4	161	53.8	20	6.8	299	100.0

All of these aspects were relatively easy to include in the induction (Table 6.15). Health and safety issues may have been more difficult to introduce due to a lack of staff experience and expertise in this specialist area.

Table 6.15

Ease of introducing familiarization processes in the student induction

Familiarization process	Easy or very easy to achieve		Difficult or very difficult to achieve		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Health and safety issues	153	51.2	46	15.4	100	33.4	299	100.0
Familiarity with staff	215	71.9	12	4.0	72	24.1	299	100.0
Familiarity with peers	229	76.6	17	5.7	53	17.7	299	100.0
Familiarity with services	215	71.9	13	4.3	71	23.8	299	100.0
Familiarity with layout	199	66.6	6	2.0	94	31.4	299	100.0

¹⁰ Schools would have no need for some of these activities in the induction. For example, familiarization with the layout of the centre.

Variations in induction

Inductions in different types of centre

There were a number of differences between types of centres in the way inductions were offered, their management, content and ease of introduction. Sixth Form Colleges showed the greatest diversity in the type of induction package offered to students (Appendix 6.1). The most popular approach in Sixth Form Colleges was to offer an induction for each course taken by the student allowing for combining elements of induction. FE Colleges tended to separate the different types of induction. Contrary to recommendations, nearly a third of FE Colleges combined all inductions with no separate GNVQ induction. A small number of FE Colleges offered a GNVQ induction only. This was surprising considering the FEFC requirements (Sutton, 1994). However, FE Colleges were the least likely to deviate from the four main packages identified in the research. Schools and Other Institutions were more likely to offer a GNVQ induction only. Students in these centres may have been less likely to combine their GNVQ programme with another qualification or these centres may have only provided induction for GNVQs. Schools were the only centres to record that they had no induction at all.

Admission varied between different types of centre (Appendix 6.2). Schools and Sixth Form Colleges clearly had little provision for rolling admission compared to FE Colleges and Other Institutions. This meant that the latter could have catered for students who left their choice of course until later, changed institutions after the start of the programme or did not achieve the entry requirements for a chosen programme or institution¹¹. These centres probably had more experience of rolling admission in relation to the range of other courses they offered.

The timing of induction varied between centres (Appendix 6.3). Schools and Sixth Form Colleges

¹¹ FE Colleges had frequently been accused by Schools and Sixth Form Colleges of recruiting GNVQ students with lower qualifications. Anecdotally, there was an assumption that any institution who admitted students after the start of a programme were doing so with lower qualifications. The research did not enable any conclusions to be drawn regarding this matter.

rarely offered a termly induction. Compared to Schools and Sixth Form Colleges, FE Colleges were three to four times more likely to have offered a termly induction. This would have enabled them to cater for different admission times. Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to have a whole centre and department based induction and least likely to have a course specific induction (Appendix 6.4). They were also much more likely to have individual approaches in their inductions (Appendix 6.5) and were the most likely to offer an induction of longer than 11 days (Appendix 6.6). Schools and Other Institutions had a similar pattern of provision being highly likely to have a course specific induction. These findings indicate that some centres may have been providing one induction focusing on a department or subject area as opposed to a specific type of course such as GNVQ or A level.

FE Colleges were most likely to include action planning, key skills, grading and study skills but least likely to include trips and visits in the induction (Appendix 6.7 - 6.11). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include the terms and language, taster activities and trips and visits (Appendix 6.11 - 6.13). Schools were least likely to include action planning, key skills, study skills and taster activities but most likely to include grading (Appendix 6.7 - 6.10 and 6.13). This showed that there were some distinct differences in the GNVQ specific nature of the inductions and what the different centres saw as the priority for the induction process. Sixth Form Colleges found it easier to introduce many aspects of GNVQ (Appendix 6.14 - 6.20). Schools and FE Colleges had a similar pattern of ease of introduction except for action planning, which Schools found easier, and grading, which FE Colleges found easier. This was interesting as previous research had noted that FE Colleges found it easier to introduce GNVQs (Ecclestone, 2000) but this wasn't the case for the induction phase.

In introducing assessment activities Schools and FE Colleges had a similar use of assignments (Appendix 6.21 and 6.22). Sixth Form Colleges were the least likely to include assignments for the portfolio and most likely to have practice assignments. APL and diagnostic assessment were largely to be found in FE Colleges and Other Institutions with Schools being less likely to use diagnostic assessment than they were APL (Appendix 6.23 and 6.24). This may have been due to their familiarity with their students. All centres found it hard to achieve assignments for the portfolio with

FE Colleges finding this most difficult (Appendix 6.25). This was to be expected as students would have been required to learn a considerable amount about the assessment process itself as well as produce evidence. FE Colleges found it easier to use diagnostic assessment than APL (Appendix 6.26 and 6.27). This was probably related to how these activities were delegated to other departments or staff. Schools found it easier to introduce APL compared to other centres but this does not mean that they would have necessarily used more APL than other centres. Sixth Form Colleges appeared to find all of these aspects quite difficult to introduce. FE Colleges and Other Institutions were most likely to include advice and guidance on routes and programmes but far less likely to include initial advice or introduce all of the courses (Appendix 6.28 - 6.30). These aspects may have been part of the recruitment process in this type of centre and therefore not included in this phase. Schools were most likely to offer initial advice but least likely to advise on the programmes or routes. Sixth Form Colleges found it easier to introduce all of these aspects in their inductions (Appendix 6.31 -6.33). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include selection of the course, the vocational area and any additional courses and the initial interview in their induction but least likely to select the level of GNVQ (Appendix 6.34 -6.38). FE Colleges concentrated on selection of the level and the optional units (Appendix 6.39), the latter being more likely to be included than in any other type of centre. The lack of selection of optional units in Schools may have reflected the lack of choice available to students. Sixth Form Colleges found it easier to introduce selection processes with the exception of optional units and the level of GNVQ (Appendix 6.40 - 6.45). These two aspects were most easily achieved in FE Colleges. These findings again showed that different centres had different priorities for the activities that had to be included in the induction process and activities that took place in a different phase.

The influence of awarding body approval on student inductions

There were variations in the type of induction package offered according to awarding body approval (Appendix 6.46). BTEC centres and those with Multiple approvals were most likely to have separate GNVQ and general inductions but were also more likely to have combined inductions. City & Guilds

and RSAEB centres were most likely to have a range of inductions and more likely to have a GNVQ induction only. This presented a confusing picture with no specific pattern emerging, only extremes of practice in all awarding bodies. RSAEB centres were most likely to commence their induction before the start of the academic year (Appendix 6.47). This was probably influenced by the number of Schools in the sample approved by this awarding body. City & Guilds centres were most likely to have informal aspects to their inductions and for inductions to be course specific and group based (Appendix 6.48 - 6.50). RSAEB centres were most likely to have formal inductions with individual approaches but least likely to have course specific inductions. Centres with Multiple approvals had formal, course specific inductions.

Centres with Multiple approvals and BTEC centres favoured shorter inductions with approximately half of their centres offering an induction of five days or less (Appendix 6.51). City & Guilds centres were the most likely to have offered an induction of more than 21 days (being three times more likely than BTEC centres to offer this length of induction). RSAEB centres had a similar pattern of provision to City & Guilds centres. In this instance, extremes of practice were related to specific awarding bodies. Compared to centres with single approval, centres with Multiple approvals were the most likely to include action planning, the terms and language, key skills, grading, study skills and taster activities (Appendix 6.52 - 6.57) and also found all of these aspects easier to introduce than all other centres (Appendix 6.58 - 6.63). This was probably due to the cumulative effect of external verification and support visits they received. Of those centres with single approval, BTEC centres were most likely to include all aspects except for taster activities and trips and visits (Appendix 6.64) but did not necessarily find them easier to include compared to other single awarding bodies. City & Guilds centres were least likely to include action planning, grading, study skills, taster activities, trips and visits and they found it most difficult to introduce key skills and study skills. RSAEB centres had slightly more mixed provision being most likely to include the taster activities and trips and visits. RSAEB centres provision of action planning and terms and language was a similar level to BTEC centres but they found it most difficult to introduce action planning, the terms and language, grading

and trips and visits (Appendix 6.65). BTEC centres were beginning to emerge as having less practical inductions compared to RSAEB centres.

Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include practice assignments, APL and diagnostic assessment in the induction (Appendix 6.66 - 6.68). RSAEB centres were least likely to include any assignments or diagnostic assessment. City & Guilds centres were the most likely to include assignments for the portfolio (Appendix 6.9). This was probably related to their tendency to have longer inductions. Centres with Multiple approvals found it easier to include assignments for the portfolio and diagnostic assessment but difficult to introduce practice assignments or APL (Appendix 6.70 - 6.73). BTEC centres found it easier to introduce practice assignments and APL. RSAEB centres found it most difficult to introduce assignments for the portfolio and diagnostic assessment. Centres appeared to be less likely to include aspects that they ultimately found more difficult.

City & Guilds centres were most likely to include initial advice and introduce all of the courses at the centre but they found introducing the initial advice most difficult (Appendix 6.74 - 6.76). They were least likely to introduce guidance on the programmes and progression routes (Appendix 6.77). Centres with Multiple approvals were least likely to introduce all of the courses at the centre. Students had probably already selected this specific course and therefore there was no need to offer any further choice. RSAEB centres found it easier to introduce other courses, initial advice and guidance on programmes and routes.

Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include the selection of the level of the programme and additional courses and optional units (Appendix 6.78 - 6.80). Whilst they found it easiest to introduce the selection of additional courses and optional units they found it most difficult to include selection of GNVQ, the vocational area or the level (Appendix 6.81 - 6.85). These aspects may have been the focus of the recruitment process. City & Guilds centres had the opposite provision, being the most likely to include selection of GNVQ as a course (Appendix 6.86) and finding this easiest to introduce. BTEC centres were the most likely to include the selection of the vocational area

(Appendix 6.87) and least likely to include the selection of the level but found this one of the easiest aspects to introduce. RSAEB found it most difficult to introduce the optional units.

The influence of GNVQ experience on student inductions

Increased experience should have enabled centres to refine their programmes and procedures including their induction package. More experienced centres were more likely to offer a GNVQ and general induction but they were also more likely to combine all inductions and the likelihood of a separate GNVQ induction decreased as the approval experience increased (Appendix 6.88). The more experienced the centre the less likely they were to offer a greater variety of inductions, appearing to rationalise their approach to all inductions. Approval experience did not effect the timing of the induction (Appendix 6.89). As a centre's own approval experience increased, the use of course specific and group inductions decreased (Appendix 6.90 and 6.91). Centres with consortium or franchise arrangements were more likely to maintain whole centre approaches to induction. Surprisingly, there appeared to be no effect on the length of induction (Appendix 6.92).

GNVQ approval experience had considerable effect on what was included in the induction process. Action planning, the terms and language, key skills, grading, study skills and taster activities were all more likely to be included and easier to achieve as the centre approval experience increased (Appendix 6.93 - 6.104). Many centres with consortium or franchise experience were also highly likely to include action planning, the terms and language, key skills and taster activities but found all of these more difficult to achieve compared to centres with their own approval experience. Assessment activities did not have such a clear pattern of development (Appendix 6.105 - 6.108). Whilst the newest centres were far less likely to include assignments for the portfolio and found a number of these aspects difficult, increased experienced did not always positively affect either their inclusion or successful introduction (Appendix 6.109 - 6.112). As own centre approval experience increased APL was more likely to be included but centres also found this increasingly difficult to achieve, centres were also less likely to use practice assignment and more likely to include diagnostic

assessment, finding the latter easier to achieve. Centres with consortium and franchise experience were least likely to include APL or diagnostic assessment.

Increased experience of own centre approval led to increased inclusion of the selection of GNVQ programmes, the vocational area, level, additional courses, optional units and the initial interview (Appendix 6.113 - 6.118). All of these aspects were also much easier to achieve as experience increased (Appendix 6.119 - 6.124). Centres with consortium and franchise experience were also very likely to include selection of GNVQ programmes, the vocational area, additional courses and the initial interview. All of these aspects, except the additional courses, were easy to achieve.

The influence of previous vocational experience on student inductions

The more experienced a centre the more likely they were to have separate inductions for the different programmes that they offered, in some cases providing complex induction packages for students (Appendix 6.125). They were less likely to have only a GNVQ induction or no induction at all. They were more likely to have group based and longer inductions and less likely to have individual aspects to their inductions (Appendix 6.126 and 6.127).

As previous vocational experience increased centres were more likely to include the terms and language, key skills, taster activities and trips and visits in the induction (Appendix 6.128 - 6.131). Introducing the key skills, taster activities and trips and visits became easier as previous experience increased (Appendix 6.132 - 6.134). This was interesting as these aspects could be regarded as being less dependent on GNVQ specific knowledge compared to other aspects. There was a similar pattern in the assessment activities in the induction. As previous experience increased centres were more likely to include assignments for the portfolio, practice assignments and diagnostic assessment (Appendix 6.135 - 6.137). They found it easier to achieve assignments for the portfolio and diagnostic assessment (Appendix 6.138 and 6.139). However, the use of APL only increased for the most experienced centres (Appendix 6.140). Neither APL or the use of practice assignments became easier

as experience increased (Appendix 6.141 and 6.142). As previous vocational experience increased there was an increased likelihood of centres including advice on programmes and routes but this did not become easier to achieve (Appendix 6.143 and 6.144).

Induction for Major league and Minor league GNVQs

Business, Health and Social Care and Art and Design programmes all had a similar pattern of induction provision (Appendix 6.145). Leisure and Tourism programmes were more likely to combine either all or some aspects of their inductions. Manufacturing programmes were the most likely to separate all their inductions but combine some aspects (Appendix 6.146) and were least likely to completely combine inductions. Information Technology and Engineering programmes were most likely to offer separate general and GNVQ inductions. Overall, Minor league GNVQs were less likely to offer only a GNVQ induction and more likely to separate the different inductions, combining some aspects. As the popularity of Major league GNVQs decreased the use of August/September admission decreased and the use of rolling admission increased (Appendix 6.147). As previously noted this was probably related to ensuring viable group sizes. With the exception of Engineering, this pattern was confirmed by the admission pattern used for Minor league GNVQs (Appendix 6.148).

Major league GNVQs all had a similar pattern for the timing of induction (Appendix 6.149) but Minor league GNVQs, were twice as likely as Major league GNVQs to have termly inductions and less likely to have their induction before the start of the programmes (Appendix 6.150). This was indicative of late recruitment or rolling admission to the programmes, used to increase numbers in these less popular vocational areas. Leisure and Tourism was less likely have a course specific induction and most likely to have a whole centre induction (Appendix 6.151). The length of induction did not vary for different vocational areas (Appendix 6.152 and 6.153). As the popularity of the vocational area decreased centres were more likely to use diagnostic assessment (Appendix 6.154) but they did not find this any easier to achieve (Appendix 6.155). Diagnostic assessment was more

popular with Minor league GNVQs, particularly Information Technology (Appendix 6.156). This may have been related to the importance of ensuring students had specific basic skills required in order to progress in these more technology based programmes. Minor league GNVQs also found it easier to include diagnostic assessment (Appendix 6.157). As the popularity of the Major league GNVQ decreased centres were less likely to include course selection and initial interviews and more likely to include selection of the level and optional units (Appendix 6.158 - 6.161). This pattern was confirmed by the Minor league GNVQs (Appendix 6.162 and 6.163).

Lead-in time and student induction

Centres with the shortest lead-in time tended to separate the inductions they offered. Centres with longer lead-in times (seven months or more) tended to separate their inductions but allow for combining some aspects (Appendix 6.164). The number of centres offering completely combined inductions decreased as the lead-in time increased. This seemed logical as the centres had more time to look at the specific requirements of the courses they offered and plan the content, enabling them to identify 'matches' in activities or requirements and combine these where appropriate. The longer the lead-in time the more likely the centre was to have an August/September admission, the likelihood of a centre having rolling admission decreasing dramatically (Appendix 6.165). This was probably related to increased preparation, marketing and recruitment activities which resulted in more students being recruited at the start of the academic year and reducing the need for rolling admission to increase numbers. Longer lead-in times resulted in increased likelihood of inductions being held prior to, and at the start of, the programmes but the use of termly inductions decreased (Appendix 6.166). Longer lead-in times resulted in more individual approaches being used (Appendix 6.167) but did not affect the length of induction (Appendix 6.168).

As the lead-in time increased action planning, key skills, grading and study skills were all more likely to be included in the induction (Appendix 6.169 - 6.172) with study skills and trips and visits easier to achieve (Appendix 6.173 and 6.174). However, it did not make it easier to introduce the more GNVQ

specific aspects of the induction such as action planning and grading (Appendix 6.175 and 6.176). As lead-in time increased, centres were more likely to include assignments for the portfolio, practice assignments, APL and diagnostic assessment (Appendix 6.177 - 6.180). Centres with the shortest lead-in time found these activities more difficult to introduce (Appendix 6.181 - 6.184). As lead-in time increased centres were more likely to include all aspects of selection (Appendix 6.185 - 6.190) and, up to an optimum time of seven to ten months, found these easier to achieve as the lead-in time increased (Appendix 6.191 - 6.196).

The influence of the length of induction

As there were far fewer centres that offered inductions of sixteen to twenty days, these were grouped with those that offered inductions of twenty one or more days to create a group offering inductions of sixteen or more days. This format was used for the remainder of this chapter. As the length of induction increased centres were more likely to offer a GNVQ only induction (Appendix 6.197). The length of induction did not effect the formality or course specific nature of induction (Appendix 6.198 and 6.199). The use of group inductions rose as the length of induction increased, up to an optimum of eleven to fifteen days (Appendix 6.200).

The introduction of the terms and language, key skills and grading were more likely to be included with a longer induction (Appendix 6.201 - 6.203) and along with study skills, all became easier to achieve (Appendix 6.204 - 6.207). However, there appeared to be an optimum induction of eleven to fifteen days after which this effect did not occur. The use of practice assignments, APL and diagnostic assessment all increased as the length of induction increased with an optimum of eleven to fifteen days (Appendix 6.208 - 6.210). The introduction of APL and diagnostic assessment became easier to achieve (Appendix 6.211 and 6.212). The length of induction did not affect the inclusion of advice and guidance on routes but it was more likely to be included in the induction up to an optimum length of eleven to fifteen days (Appendix 6.213). The inclusion of initial advice and guidance rose as the length of induction increased but there was an optimum of eleven to fifteen days after which this

effect ceased. Initial advice and the introduction of all courses became easier as the length of induction increased (Appendix 6.214 and 6.215). As the length of induction increased centres were more likely to include the initial interview and selection of the vocational area, level and optional units (Appendix 6.216 - 6.219). Although they found it more difficult to achieve the initial interviews it was easier to achieve the selection of the level and the optional units (Appendix 6.220 - 6.222).

Summary of induction

Inductions were largely offered in complex packages although there was some evidence that these packages were being 'rationalised'. A number of centres continued to offer short inductions which combined the introduction to GNVQ with a general and any other course induction. The timing of student admission and induction reflected adherence to the traditional academic year. Flexibility in admission appeared to be largely used to boost numbers in Minor league GNVQs and was used for the convenience of centres not in order to offer greater flexibility for the students. Centres were five times more likely to have induction commence before the academic year than they were to have a termly induction. The timing of admission did not always influence the use of termly inductions and therefore resulted in the loss of access to induction for these students. Centres used a mixture of management approaches in inductions but they were mostly of less than ten days duration and some of these were divided between the Summer term prior to the start of the programmes and the start of the academic year in the Autumn. The majority of inductions were too short to realistically accommodate and achieve the number of aspects noted in the content. The large number of activities gave the impression that students were subjected to an extremely intense introductory period that contained a number of aspects that centre staff already found hard to understand. This, coupled with the short time scales, appears to have created a downward spiral in some centres that found a number of aspects difficult to achieve. Subsequently, these centres may have avoided including these activities in later inductions. In these circumstances some students must have felt not only overwhelmed but that they could not achieve success on the programmes, potentially creating disaffection in the groups at a very early stage. Although the GNVQ specific activities were highly

likely to be included in the induction these were particularly hard to achieve. Assessment activities were slightly less likely to be included but were harder to achieve for some centres. Advice and guidance and selection processes were less of a priority for centres but, with the exception of optional units, were much easier to achieve. These findings could have been influenced by the management structure of the centre and whether they separated marketing and recruitment activities from the induction. The management structure of the centre appeared to influence the inclusion of familiarisation activities even though they were relatively easy to achieve.

Centre type influenced how inductions were packaged, admission times, the timing of induction, management approaches, content and ease of introduction. In particular, the management of induction appeared to be dependent on the existing management structure of the centre being made to fit into the existing provision. This may well have limited the potential to develop the 'ideal' model of induction and would explain what appeared to be a plateau effect for the implementation of most aspects. Irrespective of the requirements of the Quality Framework some aspects appeared to be unworkable within the existing institutional structures. FE Colleges and Schools shared some common approaches, content and levels of achievement, including the more GNVQ specific activities although in some respects FE Colleges had fewer extremes of practice apart from the shortness of their inductions. There was no distinct pattern to their differences. Sixth Form Colleges had a greater number of differences compared to other centres. They focused more on advice and guidance, and selection processes and were less likely to include assessment activities which they found hard to achieve.

Awarding body approval showed some interesting differences. Centres with Multiple approvals had the closest match to the Quality Framework requirements in terms of their approach and content although their inductions were very short. This indicated that, in spite of the accusations of differences between awarding bodies, these centres clearly benefited from the cumulative effect of external verification and/or support they received irrespective of awarding body affiliation. At times all awarding bodies had common levels of provision and achievement and no single awarding body

emerged overall as having 'better' inductions. Variations were across individual items and, whereas City & Guilds centres were less likely to include some GNVQ specific aspects, BTEC centres that were more likely to include them, found them harder to achieve.

The greatest influence on induction was GNVQ experience and, to a lesser extent, previous vocational experience. As GNVQ experience increased centres expanded their inductions to include more selection processes, were more likely to include GNVQ specific activities and found many aspects easier to achieve. APL remained a serious problem for many centres irrespective of previous GNVQ or other vocational experience. The importance of previous vocational experience had implications for how new centres were evaluated prior to approval to offer vocational qualifications and how awarding bodies, NCVQ and other agencies used this information to tailor their support for centres in the early years of development. The inflexible external verification system, largely aimed at the quality assurance of programmes, should have been complemented by a system that recognised that it would take two to three years to develop appropriate induction practice. Additional support from awarding bodies, NCVQ and other agencies, in conjunction with better dissemination of good practice, could have been provided to accelerate centre development. This additional support would have been particularly relevant for centres operating in franchise or consortium arrangements that, in some respects, showed a very similar level of development to the newest centres.

Most Major league GNVQs had similar inductions. However, Leisure and Tourism was most likely to differ and, at times, had more in common with the Minor league GNVQs which were less likely to include specific aspects and found a number of aspects more difficult to achieve. Differences in Leisure and Tourism inductions could be important as it may indicate why later in the programmes there were differences in standards and levels of achievement for students. A weaker induction could be an early indication of a less successful or problematic vocational area.

Lead-in time affected the packages offered, management approaches and content but had little effect on the ease of achievement of the GNVQ specific activities. There appeared to be an optimum lead-in

time of seven to ten months that resulted in inductions that more closely matched the Quality Framework. There also appeared to be an optimum length for induction of eleven to fifteen days which had a similar effect. This also resulted in some aspects being easier to achieve.

The delivery of GNVQ programmes

The Quality Framework required that centres provide programmes that offered structured opportunities to learn and meet all of the GNVQ requirements. Within these programmes centres should have provided activities for learning (including the development of knowledge, skills and understanding), activities and opportunities for assessment, learner support (including specific support for aspects of the programmes such as key skills), and an introduction to, and development of, the grading themes. The programmes should have been developed and adapted in the light of the student's achievements, feedback from activities and information on learning needs and support requirements. The learning and support activities should have been designed to build upon the induction process including the ongoing provision of advice and guidance in relation to the selection of aspects of the programmes (optional and additional units or other courses). Centres were encouraged to use the local environment and the work place as a resource for learning and assessment with programmes providing a high proportion of external links, specifically for assessment. These external links were seen as crucial in developing successful programmes. This section examines what activities were included in the programmes (including external links), resources, how individual approaches were used, the level of integration in delivery and the influences on the selection of the optional units.

The sequencing of vocational units had implications for the management of the programmes and was dependent on the style of delivery adopted by each centre. Whilst the Quality Framework offered advice on alternative strategies for delivery there were no specific requirements for determining the order for delivering the programmes but staff were reminded that students needed opportunities to take the unit tests. If centres were offering programmes tailored to individual needs they would be

expected to show some flexibility in the order of delivery in order to cater for those needs. Centres were asked how they determined the order of delivery and whether they catered for individual needs. Table 6.16 shows that the majority of the centres determined the order of course delivery and two thirds of centres linked the delivery of the units to the unit test dates. This would create a large amount of uniformity in the timing of the delivery as the test dates were agreed by all awarding bodies. However, tailoring programmes to cater for individual needs was a high priority for three quarters of the centres.

Table 6.16

Management of the delivery of programmes

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
Management of the delivery of the programmes	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Order of course delivery predetermined by school/college	272	91.0	16	5.4	11	3.6	299	100.0
Unit delivery linked to test dates	204	68.2	90	30.1	5	1.7	299	100.0
Learning tailored to individual needs	228	76.3	61	20.4	10	3.3	299	100.0

Centres were advised that one of the primary considerations should be the level of integration to be used in delivering the programmes (NCVQ et al, 1995). Centres were asked to estimate the degree of integration of specific aspects of the programmes. Table 6.17 shows that three quarters of centres integrated vocational and key skill units during the delivery of the programmes. This high level of integration could have been indicative of the lack of specialist deliver of the key skill units but could also have been indicative of the pressure to ensure coverage of these requirements. The mandatory vocational units were much more likely to be delivered separately. Integration of the delivery of mandatory and optional units was unlikely to occur. The level of integration appears to have decreased as the complexity of integration increased. Integration across mandatory or optional vocational units required a high level of understanding of the vocational units and that this

understanding be developed early in the programmes. Single unit delivery enabled the staff to concentrate on delivering a restricted part of the programme and, to some extent, rationalise their preparation for delivery. It was also highly likely that staff were delivering specific units within the programmes (according to their expertise) and that these might not always have appropriate links.

Table 6. 17

Integration of delivery

Level of integration	Complete or a high level of integration		Completely separate or a low level of integration		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Integration of delivery								
Integration of the delivery of vocational and key skill units	230	76.9	69	23.1	0	0.0	299	100.0
Integration of delivery across mandatory units	63	21.1	228	76.2	8	2.7	299	100.0
Integration of delivery across mandatory and optional units	49	16.4	237	79.3	13	4.3	299	100.0

Students should have been provided with a degree of choice in selecting their optional units and these units should, where possible, have been grouped to allow for different careers or progression routes that reflected the individual needs of students (NCVQ et al, 1995). Centres were also required to ensure that staff had the expertise needed to deliver each vocational unit. Centres were asked to rank the influences on the optional units they offered. Table 6.18 shows that staff experience or specialism was the greatest influence on the optional units offered. It was reasonable for staff to concentrate on units where they had expertise and knowledge. Just over half of the centres allowed students a high or very high level of student choice. If students were not allowed a choice of optional units this may have restricted their career choice or progression. Some centres may have eventually specialised in specific optional units and/or progression routes but students should have known if there were any limitations to the programmes they were being offered. The centre timetable was an influence in just under half of the centres. When external influences were considered the greatest influence was HE. Local industry requirements were not a consideration for the majority of centres.

Table 6. 18

Influences on the optional units

Level of influence	Very high or high influence		Some or no influence		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Influences on the optional units								
Staff experience / specialism	250	83.6	35	11.7	14	4.7	299	100.0
Student choice	173	57.9	107	35.8	19	6.3	299	100.0
Centre timetable	123	41.1	153	51.2	23	7.7	299	100.0
HE requirements	112	37.5	160	53.5	27	9.0	299	100.0
Local industry requirements	70	23.4	203	67.9	26	8.7	299	100.0
FE requirements	61	20.4	201	67.2	37	12.4	299	100.0
Other	17	5.7	3	1.0	279	93.3	299	100.0
Compact agreements	15	5.0	235	78.6	49	16.4	299	100.0

Table 6.19 shows that two thirds of centres selected the optional units prior to the delivery of the programme.

Table 6.19

Pre-selection of optional units

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pre-selection								
Pre-selected optional units	196	65.6	86	28.8	17	5.6	299	100.0

Students required ongoing advice on GNVQ. They also required access to learning activities that allowed them to develop and practise skills, and opportunities to develop their independence in building their portfolio and develop the abilities and skills needed to achieve the grading criteria. The latter may have been integrated with the vocational delivery but grading criteria would still have required staff to address these quite specific skills separately within these sessions if students were to develop their understanding and application¹². Active learning was to be encouraged to aid the

¹² Ofsted (1994) had already acknowledged that the grading criteria were difficult to understand and document. However, their priority had been to provide evidence and assessment systems that encouraged greater standardization as opposed to ensuring good quality teaching of these skills.

development of independent learning skills. In contrast, a number of centres had already been found to be offering very formal, teacher directed sessions (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994). There was also the potential to expand programmes beyond the mandatory requirements to include additional units or other courses. Centres were advised to take care when considering whether students should take additional courses and to address this issue on an individual basis. Table 6.20 shows that the majority of the GNVQ specific aspects were highly or very highly featured in the programmes offered by a large number of centres. Action planning to complete assignments was the highest priority and nearly all centres included opportunities for unit test resits. Formal lecture input was favoured by just over half of the centres but it was possible that this response could have varied at different stages of the programmes. Aspects that might have been seen as peripheral or not essential, were a lower priority for centres and less likely to be included in the programmes. For example, additional units and fast track completion were not mandatory requirements. Fast track completion would have required centres to alter delivery and assessment schedules which would have required a thorough understanding of the programmes and a good deal of preparation. Previous research had established that some staff had insufficient knowledge of what completed portfolios should contain (Ofsted, 1994). This may have influenced the response to this question as staff may have avoided including this aspect until they felt sufficiently competent. The use of diagnostic assessment rose by 13 per cent in the delivery phase but the use of APL fell by four per cent.

Table 6.20

GNVQ specific approaches in the programmes

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GNVQ specific approach								
Action planning to complete assignments	288	96.3	6	2.0	5	1.7	299	100.0
Active learning	287	96.0	7	2.3	5	1.7	299	100.0
Unit test resit opportunities	282	94.3	12	4.0	5	1.7	299	100.0
Advice and guidance on GNVQ	281	94.0	13	4.3	5	1.7	299	100.0
Real world research	252	84.3	33	11.0	14	4.7	299	100.0
Advising students of unit certifications	223	74.6	64	21.4	12	4.0	299	100.0
Separate grading criteria input	196	65.6	83	27.8	20	6.6	299	100.0
Diagnostic assessment	170	56.9	121	40.5	8	2.6	299	100.0
Formal lecture input	153	51.2	138	46.2	8	2.6	299	100.0
APL	121	40.5	171	57.2	7	2.3	299	100.0
Separate CAR and portfolio input	118	39.5	124	41.5	57	19.0	299	100.0
Additional units	109	36.5	176	58.9	14	4.6	299	100.0
Fast track completion option	75	25.1	211	70.6	13	4.3	299	100.0

The importance of action planning had already been established in the induction and the use of action planning for learning was to be encouraged during the programmes (NCVQ et al, 1995). The outcomes of action planning would require centres to provide students with ongoing advice on their achievements and address their individual needs. This should have created the potential for students to negotiate some aspects of the course. Table 6.21 shows that the majority of centres included action planning for learning and provided ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements. Less than half of the centres allowed students to negotiate individual programmes and optional units were least likely to be open to negotiation.

Table 6.21

Planning, advice and negotiation

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Planning, advice and negotiation								
Action planning to plan learning	277	92.6	16	5.4	6	2.0	299	100.0
Ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements	273	91.3	17	5.7	9	3.0	299	100.0
Negotiating individual GNVQ programmes	137	45.8	153	51.2	9	3.0	299	100.0
Negotiated optional units	90	30.1	199	66.6	10	3.3	299	100.0

Table 6.22 shows that study skills and specific learner support featured highly or very highly in programmes in the majority of centres. Movements between levels within the same vocational area were available in just over a third of centres but movements between vocational areas were only available in a fifth of centres. Therefore it was essential that the students were guided to the correct levels and vocational areas before they commenced their programmes. Nearly half of the centres used non-GNVQ staff for pastoral care.

Table 6.22

Other aspects of programme content

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Other aspects								
Study skills	251	83.9	38	12.8	10	3.3	299	100.0
Specific learner support	231	77.3	58	19.4	10	3.3	299	100.0
Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors	149	49.8	134	44.8	16	5.4	299	100.0
Student movements between levels in the same vocational area	108	36.1	176	58.9	15	5.0	299	100.0
Student movements between vocational areas	62	20.7	223	74.6	14	4.7	299	100.0

The activity based nature of GNVQ required that centres needed to provide access to a range of learning materials and resources (NCVQ et al, 1995). Previous research had found that centres offering successful courses provided access to a range of resources including external links and access to work experience (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994). Table 6.23 shows that nearly all centres noted that they provided a range of resources for students including work experience, using the library, visits to and from industry and visiting speakers. Other resources were far less likely to be included in the programmes . Links with other GNVQ centres were least likely to be included with just over a quarter of centres noting that this was a high or very high priority.

Table 6.23

Resources for delivery

Resources	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A range of resources that were easily accessible to students	279	93.3	14	4.7	6	2.0	299	100.0
Work experience	274	91.6	20	6.7	5	1.7	299	100.0
Use of library	271	90.6	23	7.7	5	1.7	299	100.0
Visits to industry by students	251	83.9	41	13.7	7	2.4	299	100.0
Visiting speakers	207	69.2	86	28.8	6	2.0	299	100.0
Industry information packs	101	33.8	182	60.9	16	5.3	299	100.0
Visits to/from FE/HE	91	30.4	200	66.9	8	2.7	299	100.0
Links with other GNVQ centres	80	26.7	212	70.9	7	2.4	299	100.0

Variations in delivery

Programmes offered in different types of centre

All centres exerted a high level of control over the order of delivery irrespective of centre type (Appendix 6.223). However, Schools were least likely to link their delivery to the test dates (Appendix 6.224). FE Colleges were much less likely to tailor programmes to individual learning

needs with a third of these centres noting this was not a priority or a low priority in the programmes (Appendix 6.225). Sixth Form Colleges and Other Institutions were the most likely to use this approach. Sixth Form Colleges were also most likely to integrate the delivery of vocational and key skill units (Appendix 6.226). FE Colleges and Other Institutions were much less likely to integrate delivery of vocational and key skill units with nearly a third of FE Colleges having low or no integration. FE Colleges were the most likely to integrate the delivery across the mandatory units (Appendix 6.227). Schools and Sixth Form Colleges were less likely to integrate delivery of these units. Schools were the most likely to integrate mandatory and optional units (Appendix 6.228).

Optional units offered in Schools were mostly influenced by staff experience and specialism (Appendix 6.229). Whilst this remains a high influence for all types of centre this research shows that there were a number of other significant influences in other centres. FE and Sixth Form Colleges were also influenced by HE requirements which indicates that their students were more likely to be progressing to HE than those in Schools. Other Institutions were less likely to be influenced by student choice. The centre timetable was an influence irrespective of centre type. Sixth Form and FE Colleges were much more likely than Schools and Other Institutions to pre-select the optionals for the programmes they offered (Appendix 6.230). Schools and Other Institutions appeared to leave the selection of the optional units until later in the programmes.

Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include action planning for assignments, active learning, test resit opportunities, advice and guidance on GNVQ, real world research, separate grading input and separate CAR/portfolio input (Appendix 6.231 - 6.237). They were least likely to advise students of unit certification, include APL or offer fast-track completion (Appendix 6.238 - 6.240). Other Institutions shared the same high level of including active learning and test resit opportunities but were also most likely to include advise on unit certification, APL and offer fast-track completion. FE Colleges were much more likely than other centres to offer diagnostic assessment and additional units, with three quarters of them offering the latter (Appendix 6.241 and 6.242). The high level of additional units may have been related to HE entry requirements. FE Colleges were least likely to

include active learning, test resit opportunities, real world research or separate grading input. Schools were least likely to include action planning for assignments, active learning, diagnostic assessment, separate CAR/portfolio input or additional units (only a quarter of them offered the latter).

FE Colleges were most likely to offer formal lecture input and negotiate individual programmes and optional units (Appendix 6.243 - 6.245). Whilst Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to offer ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements (Appendix 6.246) they were the least likely to negotiate optional units. Schools were least likely to include action planning for learning although this was still included by the majority of centres (Appendix 6.247). However, they were much less likely to offer formal lecture input with less than half of these centres including this approach.

Schools were least likely to include study skills, specific learner support, movements between levels or vocational areas (Appendix 6.248 - 6.251). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include study skills and pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors (Appendix 6.252). If pastoral care was undertaken by non-GNVQ tutors it would reduce the amount of contact with GNVQ staff and the opportunities to check on the progress of work. FE Colleges were the most likely to offer specific learner support (complementing the continuing use of diagnostic assessment as part of the delivery phase) and movement between levels, and least likely to offer pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors. Other Institutions were much more likely to allow movements between vocational areas.

Schools were most likely to visit industry, have visiting speakers and links with other centres (Appendix 6.253 - 6.255). The latter was probably related to franchise and consortium arrangements. They were least likely to have a range of resources, use the library or include visits to/from FE/HE (Appendix 6.256 - 6.258). On the whole they appeared to have more active programmes and opportunities for primary research and information gathering essential for achieving the grading criteria. Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include the use of library and industry information packs (Appendix 6.259). These programmes appeared to be more restricted in actual contact with industry or industry representatives compared to those offered by Schools. FE Colleges were least

likely to have external links and access to industry, being far less likely to have visiting speakers, use industry information packs or work experience (Appendix 6.260). Other Institutions had a mixture of provision being the most likely to include a range of resources, work experience and use of the library but least likely to include visits to industry.

The influence of awarding body approval on the delivery

Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to predetermine the deliver of the programmes and RSAEB centres were least likely to predetermine the delivery of the programmes (Appendix 6.261). BTEC centres were most likely to link unit delivery to test dates with three quarters of these centres adopting this approach (Appendix 6.262). They were much less likely to include learning tailored to individual needs which fitted in with their overall pattern of less individual or negotiated approaches and a high level of centre control (Appendix 6.263). City & Guilds centres were more likely to include learning tailored to individual needs and least likely to link delivery to the unit test dates.

Centres with Multiple approvals were the most likely to integrate delivery across mandatory units and across mandatory and optional units, being almost twice as likely as RSAEB centres to have developed this approach (Appendix 6.264 and 6.265). These programmes were quite advanced in how delivery was integrated. BTEC centres were least likely to integrate the delivery of the vocational and key skill units with just over a quarter of these centres noting that this was either a low priority or not a priority at all (Appendix 6.266). RSAEB were most likely to integrate the delivery of vocational and key skill units but other types of integration were less of a priority.

Optional units in BTEC centres were more likely to be preselected (Appendix 6.267) and influenced by staff experience or specialism and the centre timetable as opposed to student choice (Appendix 6.268). Compared to other single awarding bodies City & Guilds centres were least likely to be influenced by student choice, centre timetable, HE requirements, local industry requirements and FE requirements. Staff expertise or specialism had the greatest influence in these centres. In contrast, RSAEB centres were most likely to be influenced by student choice and least likely to be influenced

by staff experience or specialism. Centres with Multiple approvals were nearly twice as likely as other centres to be influenced by HE requirements with this reason being almost as important as staff specialism in these centres. Centre timetable and HE requirements were also a greater influence than student choice in these centres. Although influence from compact agreements and local industry remained low for all centres, it was the centres with Multiple approval that were more likely to be influenced by these external factors.

Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include unit test resits, separate grading criteria input, diagnostic assessment, APL, separate CAR/portfolio input, additional units and fast-track completion (Appendix 6.269 - 6.275). BTEC centres had a slightly different order of priorities for these aspects of the programmes. For example, additional units were a much higher priority than separate CAR/portfolio input. They were most likely to include real world research (Appendix 6.276) and least likely to include advice on unit certification (Appendix 6.277), separate grading input, separate advice on CAR/portfolio or fast-track completion. City and Guilds centres were most likely to include action planning for completing assignments as a high priority (Appendix 6.278) and least likely to include real world research or APL. RSAEB were least likely to include unit test resits, diagnostic assessment and additional units. As the priority for an aspect decreased for all centres the gap between RSAEB centres and others increased. For example, RSAEB centres were slightly less likely to include active learning (Appendix 6.279) but much less likely to include additional units.

Centres with Multiple approvals displayed a mixture of control and negotiation. They were most likely to include action planning for learning, formal lecture input and negotiated optional units (Appendix 6.280 - 6.282). BTEC centres were most likely to include ongoing advice but were the least likely to offer negotiated individual programmes or optional units (Appendix 6.283 and 6.284). Overall, there appeared to be a higher level of centre control compared to other awarding bodies. City & Guilds centres placed negotiated individual programmes as a much higher priority than formal lecture input (which they were least likely to include). Overall, these centres appeared to be much more student orientated allowing a higher level of negotiation than other centres. RSAEB centres

were most likely to negotiate individual programmes and least likely to include action planning for learning and ongoing advice.

City & Guilds centres were most likely to have pastoral care from non-GNVQ staff and the least likely to include study skills or movements between vocational areas (Appendix 6.285 - 6.287).

RSAEB centres were the least likely to include specific learner support, pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors and movements between levels in the same vocational area (Appendix 6.288 and 6.289). In complete contrast, centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include study skills, specific learner support, movements between levels and movements between vocational areas.

Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to have a range of resources, use of the library, visiting speakers, industry information packs and visits to/from FE/HE but least likely to have visits to industry (Appendix 6.290 - 6.295). BTEC centres were most likely to include work experience (Appendix 6.296) and visits to industry and least likely to include visiting speakers or links with other centres (Appendix 6.297). City & Guilds centres were least likely to include work experience, use of the library or visits to/from FE/HE. RSAEB centres were most likely to have links with other centres and least likely to include a range of resources and industry information packs.

The influence of GNVQ experience on the programmes

As centre approval experience increased there was a steady reduction in the control over the order course delivery and centres became less dependent on test dates (Appendix 6.298 and 6.299). Centres with franchises or consortium experience also exerted less control over the order of course delivery. Learning tailored to individual needs also became less of a priority (Appendix 6.300). Integration across mandatory vocational units and between mandatory and optional units increased steadily as GNVQ approval experience increased (Appendix 6.301 and 6.302). Centres with franchise or consortium experience tended to have similar levels of integration to new centres. The use of preselected optional units increased steadily as GNVQ experience increased (Appendix 6.303).

Centres with franchise or consortium experience were less likely to offer preselected optional units. As GNVQ approval experience increased FE requirements, HE requirements and Compact agreements all had increased influence on the optional units offered and the influence of staff experience/specialism decreased (Appendix 6.304). The newest centres were least likely to be influenced by student choice or the centre timetable.

More experienced centres were more likely to include active learning, advice and guidance, separate grading criteria and CAR/portfolio input and additional units, the latter rising dramatically (Appendix 6.305 - 6.309). Centres with franchise or consortium experience were least likely to include active learning, advice and guidance on GNVQ or unit certification, (Appendix 6.310), separate grading criteria input and separate CAR/portfolio input. Programmes in these centres were much further removed from the ideal model. Experienced centres were more likely to include action planning for learning, formal lecture input, negotiated individual programmes and negotiated optional units (Appendix 6.311 - 6.314). Centres with franchise or consortium experience were least likely to include action planning for learning, ongoing advice (Appendix 6.315), and formal lecture input.

As own approval experience increased centres were more likely to include study skills, specific learner support, and movement between levels and vocational areas (Appendix 6.316 - 6.319). The use of non-GNVQ tutors for pastoral care decreased with experience (Appendix 6.320). It was likely that, as the programmes became more established and the number of programmes and students increased, the GNVQ team were able to manage their own tutor groups. Centres with franchise or consortium experience had similar provision to new centres. Experienced centres were more likely to include a range of resources, use of the library, visits to industry and visits to/from FE/HE (Appendix 6.321 - 6.324). Use of visiting speakers and links with other centres decreased as experience increased (Appendix 6.325 and 6.326). Centres with franchise or consortium experience were least likely to include a range of resources or visits to industry and less likely to include the use of the library.

The influence of previous vocational experience on programmes

Previous vocational experience had less effect on the delivery of the programmes. As previous vocational experience increased both the centre timetable and HE requirements were more likely to influence the optional units offered at a centre (Appendix 6.327). Centres were more likely to include active learning, advice and guidance on GNVQ, advice on unit certification and offer additional units (Appendix 6.328 - 6.331). More experienced centres were more likely to include action planning for learning, ongoing advice on GNVQ achievements, and negotiate individual programmes and optional units (Appendix 6.332 - 6.335). Pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors decreased (Appendix 6.336). Increased previous vocational experience also resulted in increased use of work experience, visits to industry, industry information packs and links with other centres (Appendix 6.337 - 6.340).

Delivery for Major and Minor league GNVQs

There were a number of differences between the Major league GNVQs. Art and Design centres were less likely to predetermine the order of the course and were most likely to tailor learning to individual needs (Appendix 6.341 and 6.342). This probably reflected a project based approach in these programmes. Business were the least likely to include learning tailored to individual needs as a high priority. Although none of the vocational areas had a particularly high level of integration of delivery across the mandatory and optional units, Leisure and Tourism and Art and Design were less likely to use this approach (Appendix 6.343). Optional units in Leisure and Tourism and Art and Design were more likely to be influenced by HE and FE requirements compared to Business and Health and Social Care where the centre timetable was the greatest influence (Appendix 6.344). Art and Design programmes were more likely to include advice on unit certification, separate CAR/portfolio input and additional units and were most likely to negotiate individual programmes and optional units (Appendix 6.345 - 6.349). Leisure and Tourism also had a high priority for additional units. This may have been related to the higher level of influence of HE on both of these programmes. Leisure and Tourism programmes were least likely to include separate grading (Appendix 6.350) or

CAR/portfolio input and formal lecture input (Appendix 6.351) but also had a higher priority for negotiating individual programmes and optional units. As the popularity of the vocational area decreased programmes were more likely to include study skills, movements between vocational areas, work experience and visits to/from FE/HE (Appendix 6.352 - 6.355). Art & Design were least likely to include pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors (Appendix 6.356).

There were more differences between the Minor league GNVQs as a group. As the popularity of the vocational area decreased centres were less likely to predetermine the order of the course or to tailor courses to individual needs (Appendix 6.357 and 6.358) but increasingly likely to link delivery to test dates (Appendix 6.359). Surprisingly, the integration of vocational and key skill units rose as the popularity of the vocational area decreased (Appendix 6.360) but Information Technology programmes were much less likely to integrate delivery across any of the vocational units (Appendix 6.361 and 6.362). The optional units offered in all vocational areas were mostly influenced by staff experience or specialism, although this was to a lesser extent in Information Technology (Appendix 6.363). However, HE requirements were also a high influence. The use of preselected optional units rose as the popularity of the vocational area decreased (Appendix 6.364).

As the popularity of the vocational area decreased centres were more likely to include advice on unit certification and separate grading input but less likely to include advice on GNVQ (Appendix 6.365 - 6.367). Information Technology programmes were most likely to include separate CAR/portfolio input and additional units (Appendix 6.368 and 6.369). Manufacturing were most likely to include active learning (Appendix 6.370) and least likely to include advice on unit certification, separate CAR/portfolio input and additional units. Decreased popularity also led to centres being less likely to include action planning and more likely to include formal lectures (Appendix 6.371 and 6.372). Information Technology was most likely to include negotiated individual programmes, study skills, specific learner support and movements between vocational areas (Appendix 6.373 - 6.376). They were least likely to include negotiation of optional units and pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors (Appendix 6.377 and 6.378). This was in direct contrast to Manufacturing programmes.

Information Technology programmes were most likely to have a range of resources and use of the library but least likely to include visits to industry, visiting speakers, industry information packs and links with other centres (Appendix 6.379 - 6.384). Manufacturing programmes were again almost the complete opposite. Only visits to/from FE/HE increased as the popularity of the vocational area decreased (Appendix 6.385).

The influence of lead-in times on programmes

Integration of delivery was more likely to take place with a lead-in time of four to six months (Appendix 6.386 - 6.388). Lead-in time had some interesting effects on the optional units offered in centres. Centres with shorter lead-in times were more highly influenced by HE requirements when considering which optional units they would offer (Appendix 6.389). Centres with longer lead-in times were more likely to be influenced by the centre timetable and student choice. Centres were more likely to include separate grading input with a lead-in time of seven to ten months and advice on unit certification and additional units more likely to be included with a lead-in time of four to six months (Appendix 6.390 - 6.392). Separate CAR/portfolio input was less likely to be included as lead-in increased (Appendix 6.393) and centres with the shortest lead-in time were least likely to advise on unit certification.

As the lead-in time increased centres were more likely to include action planning for learning, negotiated individual programmes, negotiated optional units, use of the library, visits to industry, visiting speakers, industry information packs and links with other centres (Appendix 6.394 - 6.401).

The additional lead-in time resulted in a wider range of resources for the programmes and more external links. Formal lecture input generally decreased up until eleven months or more lead-in (Appendix 6.402). Ongoing advice, study skills, specific learner support and movements between levels were most likely to be included by centres with a lead-in time of 4 - 6 months (Appendix 6.403 - 6.406).

Summary of delivery

Although the programmes offered in different centres had many similarities there were some distinct differences in the approaches used that could have affected a student's decision to pursue a programme at a particular type of centre. Schools showed a lower level of integration across the whole programme and therefore were more likely to deliver by individual units or elements. This would have created the potential for ongoing unit certification should the need arise. They had a reasonable level of staff control but offered the most varied programmes in terms of the content, the range of resources and external links and the opportunities offered to students. However, they were less likely to offer individual learner support. They did not appear to be influenced by external factors or other institutions (e.g. HE) but appeared highly dependent on the expertise of their staff in determining the programme content.

Sixth Form Colleges had a high level of staff control and restricted student choice. They were less likely to offer individual approaches or include aspects that allowed for deviation from a basic, mandatory programme. The programmes offered in these centres appeared to be more academic with a higher level of influence from HE. They were less likely to have external links or resources with most aspects being very centre based and highly controlled, for example preselected optional units. However, they had higher levels of integration which should have reduced the potentially repetitious and piece-meal approach used by Schools, but this may have limited the potential for unit certification.

FE Colleges showed high levels of integration and staff control in delivery. However, they were the most likely to offer learner support and broader programmes in terms of access to additional units. This extended the breadth of the programmes as these centres were already more likely to offer NVQ units and other vocational programmes as options alongside the GNVQ programmes. Overall, these programmes were less academic than those in Sixth Form Colleges but, in terms of resources, were not as varied as those offered in Schools. Programmes in Other Institutions appeared to be designed

for individuals and gave the impression of roll-on roll-off cohorts. Whilst there was less staff control, they offered a greater amount of student choice. However, resources for these programmes were more restricted than in other centres.

Centres with different awarding body approvals sometimes had different priorities for what was included in the programmes and the approaches used for delivery. BTEC centres had a higher level of staff control, less negotiation with students, were more influenced by internal factors and had less integration in delivery. City & Guilds centres had greater integration in delivery, less staff control, more negotiation with students and appeared to cater more for individuals. The two greatest extremes were seen in the models of GNVQ offered in centres with Multiple approvals and RSAEB centres. Centres with Multiple approvals were more likely to match the Quality Framework requirements and include many of the aspects and approaches that were specific to GNVQ. RSAEB centres appeared less developed with many aspects not being included to the same extent. They had some integration in delivery, less staff control and used more negotiation with students. Centres with Multiple approvals appeared to have a balance of provision. They had some integration in delivery, were influenced by internal and external factors in managing their programmes and had a mixture of centre control and negotiation.

Many aspects of GNVQ provision were more likely to be included, and as a higher priority, as the centre approval experience increased. This resulted in centres moving closer to the Quality Framework for most aspects of the programmes. Centres with franchise or consortium experience were less likely to offer programmes that met these requirements and, in some respects, they had similar provision to new centres. This finding must be of great concern as a number of these centres have several years experience in these arrangements but did not appear to be developing in the same way as centres with their own approval. This had implications for how these centres were monitored and supported.

Contrary to the encouragement from government ministers to increase franchise and consortium arrangements, this research suggests that these arrangements should be actively discouraged. Previous vocational experience had a much lesser effect on programme content and the approaches used.

There were no differences between the Major league and Minor league GNVQs for the way unit delivery was linked to test dates, the level of integration for the mandatory units (with the exception of Manufacturing), how the course delivery was determined, the ongoing advice available and the use of active learning. Manufacturing had a small number of similarities with the Major league group but there were also some differences, even when compared to the other Minor league GNVQs.

Both Major league and Minor league GNVQs had mixed provision for how student choice influenced optional units, and the use of separate CAR/portfolio input, pastoral care by non-GNVQ tutors, negotiation of optional units, fast-track completion and provision for individual needs. Most of these characteristics were related to student choice and support. Major league GNVQs had more integrated delivery, less influences affecting optional units (most specifically less influence from other organisations), more resources, used industry to a greater extent (including work experience and information packs), and were more likely to include action planning to plan learning and provide advice on unit certification.

Minor league GNVQs usually had some integration, more external influences on optional units and greater use of preselected optional units. They had more individual approaches such as negotiating programmes, learner support, movements between vocational areas, and offered additional units. It was possible that more individual approaches were used in the Minor league GNVQs when there were fewer students in each group. Differences may be further explained by the experience of the centres. Major league GNVQs were not simply the most popular but also the oldest GNVQs. As the oldest and most established programmes they may have received more investment in resources and had a longer period of time to develop these programmes. The characteristics of Information Technology and Manufacturing which were shared with Major league GNVQs may indicate that they had entered a period of development and were moving towards the same or similar overall programme provision as the Major league GNVQs.

The lead-in time affected the degree of staff control and the use of individual approaches. The lead-in time for the centre may have affected the amount of preparation time for the programmes. Whilst some of the programme content and approaches used were affected by the lead-in time, in many instances there appeared to be an optimum lead-in time of 4 - 6 months whereby centres were considerably more likely to include certain aspects or approaches. In some instances it could be seen that, although there was a general tendency to include aspects as the lead-in time increased, a lead-in time of 7 - 10 months resulted in a slight decrease in this trend. It is likely that centres with a lead-in time of four to six months concentrated on developing the delivery of the programmes as opposed to the induction which was seen to benefit from a lead-in of seven to ten months.

The exit phase of GNVQ programmes

Most of the previous reporting on progression routes focused on HE after Advanced level GNVQ (Hyland and Weller, 1994; FEU, 1994b; Ofsted, 1994). In the early stages of implementation GNVQs were promoted as broad preparation for employment and a route to HE (DES, 1991) and NCVQ endeavoured to persuade HE to interview GNVQ students (Hyland and Weller, 1994). The aspirations of students also played an important part in how GNVQ was used for progression. By 1994 it was apparent that students increasingly sought to progress to HE with just over half of GNVQ students expressing an interest in this route (Webb and Shaw, 1994; FEU, 1994b). The end of a programme was identified as a key transition stage when further advice and guidance should be made available to students (NCVQ et al, 1995). Centres were encouraged to make use of external links to develop progression opportunities including HE (possibly via compact agreements), FE and local employers. This section explores how some of these links were being developed within the exit phase, what opportunities were available for progression and the advice and guidance provided for students.

In the early stages of GNVQ a number of centres identified the need for greater understanding and awareness of GNVQ amongst careers officers, school careers coordinators and employers, and the

need to promote and increase the use of external relationships (ED, 1992). Previous research showed that whilst students were made aware of progression opportunities in education and work they felt that this information was too biased towards HE and not enough guidance was provided on employment opportunities (Whiteside, 1994).

Advice and guidance on careers

There was increasing recognition of the importance of careers education and guidance and the need to focus on preparation for choice, preparation for change, transitions which affected education, training and life (Crombie White et al, 1995). Most GNVQ centres already had systems for providing careers guidance in conjunction with a range of advice, guidance and counseling on employment opportunities and HE (Webb and Shaw, 1994) and made good use of careers officers (FEFC, 1994). However, effective curriculum management was needed to integrate progression (ED, 1993). Table 6.24 shows that a large number of centres provided individual careers advice, access to local authority careers advisors and, to a lesser extent, group careers advice. Individual careers advice was a very high priority for nearly all of the centres.

Table 6.24

Careers advice and guidance

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
Careers advice and guidance	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Individual careers advice	279	93.3	11	3.6	9	3.1	299	100.0
Use of local authority careers advisor	249	83.3	40	13.4	10	3.3	299	100.0
Group careers advice	211	70.6	72	24.1	16	5.3	299	100.0

Previous research had found that students took their portfolios or examples of work to HE interviews (Ofsted, 1994). Table 6.25 shows that only just over half the centres advised students how to use their portfolio after the course. This level of response may have been the result of a lack of understanding, lack of time or opportunity within the exit phase or that staff did not see this as a priority compared to other activities in the exit phase. The majority of centres advised students of unit certification but this priority only rose by ten per cent compared to the level of priority found in the delivery phase. A higher percentage of centres advised students of their GNVQ achievements with a similar number of centres including this in both the delivery and exit phases.

Table 6.25

GNVQ advice and guidance

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GNVQ advice and guidance								
Advice on using the portfolio after the course	167	55.9	118	39.4	14	4.7	299	100.0
Advising students of GNVQ achievements	276	92.3	12	4.0	11	3.7	299	100.0
Advising students of unit certifications	251	83.9	34	11.4	14	4.7	299	100.0

Completion of the programmes

Previous research had found that the majority of students were confused about recording assessment and that, although some centres used tutorials to review portfolios, this was not always integrated into the programmes. Some portfolios were poorly managed and they showed a lack of appropriate advice (FEFC, 1994; Ofsted, 1994). Table 6.26 shows that the number of centres negotiating individual programmes almost doubled in the exit phase compared to the delivery phase. Only a quarter of centres allowed fast-track completion of GNVQs. This was a very similar figure to that found during

the delivery phase. The number of centres that offered students additional advice on completing assessment records or the portfolio rose considerably in the exit phase compared to the delivery phase. Whilst these figures may be slightly distorted due to the Cumulative Assessment Record being specific to RSAEB centres, all students, irrespective of awarding body, had to complete a portfolio and maintain assessment records.

Table 6.26

Completing the programme

Completion activity	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Negotiating individual programmes for completion of GNVQ	252	84.3	33	11.0	14	4.7	299	100.0
Workshops on completing Cumulative assessment records and portfolios	197	65.9	84	28.1	18	6.0	299	100.0
Fast-track completion option	75	25.1	201	67.3	23	7.6	299	100.0

Progression routes

Attitudes towards progression routes varied amongst centre staff (FEU, 1993; Tomlinson, 1995). Although GNVQs were designed to allow students to postpone their final career choice, individuals and institutions questioned the suitability of specific routes (FEU, 1993; Hyland and Weller, 1994). This air of doubt was exacerbated by the findings of previous research. This showed that just over a third of centres found that GNVQs were not recognised by employers and few recognised them as relevant to work (Hyland and Weller, 1994). The attitude of employers and HE was crucial in promoting parity of esteem between GNVQs and A levels (ED, 1992; Sutton, 1994) and further information was important in helping to create progression opportunities through and beyond GNVQ

(ED, 1993; Sims 1994). This research had already established that few GNVQ students were taking NVQ units with their GNVQ¹³.

It was particularly important for students to be provided with guidance on progression opportunities in order to make informed career choices (Crombie White et al, 1995). Progression to HE was seen as a major advantage of GNVQs (ED, 1992) and it was apparent that GNVQ had the potential to become an increasingly important qualification, particularly as it became more positively received by HE (FEFC, 1994; Ofsted, 1994; Crombie White et al, 1995)¹⁴. Compact agreements helped centres to create good local links with HE (FEU, 1993; Ofsted, 1994). By 1994 ninety per cent of HE institutions had agreed to accept GNVQs as an entry qualification (Hyland, 1994d). Early research showed that GNVQ students in schools viewed it as a route to FE and training as well as HE (ED, 1993), and that most Intermediate students in schools were progressing to Advanced programmes or full-time FE courses with 20 per cent going into employment (Ofsted, 1994). Increasingly, students were provided with the opportunity to progress to the next level GNVQ (Ofsted, 1994). This was indicative of the increasing number of centres offering Advanced level.

Table 6.27 shows that two thirds of centres included visits to potential providers of progression routes as part of the exit phase. Whilst visits to or from industry were a high priority during the delivery phase visits to or from F/HE were a much lower priority. Overall, these visits declined in priority although it was not possible to determine the balance of these to the different organisations. Nearly three quarters of centres allowed for the completion of FE applications. This could have been a reflection of the number of schools in the sample but a similar number of centres included HE applications as part of the exit phase. Centres were more likely to include applications to employment than applications for any other progression route.

¹³ Combining NVQs and GNVQs was thought to have increased the employability of students and flexibility in progression (Webb and Shaw, 1994).

¹⁴ The introduction of GNVQs coincided with increasing numbers of students staying on in post-16 provision and the increased availability of HE places (FEU, 1994b; Sutton, 1994). However, in 1994/95 HE places were capped, potentially reducing places for GNVQ students (Hyland, 1994d). However, this did not prevent 85 per cent of Advanced GNVQ applicants being offered HE places compared to 75 per cent of A level applicants (Crombie White et al, 1995).

Table 6.27

Progression routes (external)

Progression activity	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Visits to/from Industry, FE, HE	198	66.2	85	28.4	16	5.4	299	100.0
Completing FE applications	213	71.2	63	21.1	23	7.7	299	100.0
Completing HE applications	212	70.9	71	23.7	16	5.4	299	100.0
Completing employment applications	255	85.3	32	10.7	12	4.0	299	100.0

A number of students were using progression through different levels of GNVQ to progress to HE (FEU, 1994b). Selection of another course was a high or very high priority in the majority of centres (Table 6.28). A similar number of centres include selection of the next level of GNVQ as an option.

Table 6.28

Progression routes (courses)

Progression activity	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selection of another course (not GNVQ)	240	80.3	45	15.0	14	4.7	299	100.0
Selection of next level GNVQ course	246	82.3	35	11.7	18	6.0	299	100.0

The priorities in the exit phase showed that activities that focused on advice or guidance were again more likely to be included and the more GNVQ specific activities were a much lower priority. The individual nature of the programmes increased in the exit phase.

Variations in the exit phase

The exit phase in different types of centre

Funding mechanisms within FE meant that colleges were under increasing pressure to ensure that students completed a full GNVQ within the normal time scales¹⁵ (Hugill, 1994; Sutton, 1994).

Previous research had found that in Schools the majority of incomplete qualifications at Intermediate level were finished during a second year. (Ofsted, 1994). This research found that Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include individual and group careers advice (Appendix 6.407 and 6.408). Schools were much more likely to use the local authority careers advisor (Appendix 6.409). FE Colleges and Other Institutions were most likely to provide advice on using the portfolio after the course (Appendix 6.410). This could be attributed to their previous vocational experience which was more likely to include NVQs where portfolios were also a requirement. Sixth Form Colleges were far less likely to include this aspect but had a similar level of priority to FE Colleges when advising on GNVQ achievements (Appendix 6.411). FE Colleges did not include unit certification as a high priority but it was Sixth Form Colleges that were least likely to include this advice (Appendix 6.412).

Other Institutions were most likely to negotiate individual programmes and provide workshops to complete assessment records or portfolios (Appendix 6.413 and 6.414). Schools were least likely to offer workshops on completing assessment records or portfolios. It was possible that portfolios and assessment records were being completed as the course progressed although it was unlikely that this would entirely explain the lower number including this as a priority. Sixth Form Colleges were the least likely to offer individual approaches in this phase of the programme being much less likely to negotiate individual programmes or allow fast-track completion (Appendix 6.415). FE Colleges were most likely to offer fast track completion and highly likely to negotiate individual programmes.

Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include visits to external agencies (Appendix 6.416). These

¹⁵ One year for Foundation and Intermediate level and two years for Advanced level.

centres also had visits to industry and FE/HE as high priorities during the delivery phase. Other Institutions were much less likely to include these visits. Centres had different priorities for applications during the exit phase. FE applications were more likely to be a priority in Schools and FE Colleges (Appendix 6.417). FE Colleges were most likely to include HE applications (Appendix 6.418). Only Schools were less likely to include HE applications compared to FE applications in this phase of the programme. Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include employment applications (Appendix 6.419). Schools were least likely to offer progression to a non-GNVQ course (Appendix 6.420) which could have been a reflection of the centres' capacity to offer a range of courses in order to create further progression routes. The high priority of this type of progression within FE Colleges was probably indicative of the broader range of qualifications offered at Advanced level and beyond, including Higher National Diplomas and degrees. Apart from Other Institutions, all types of centres appeared equally likely to offer the next level of GNVQ as a progression option (Appendix 6.421).

The influence of awarding body approval on the exit phase

BTEC centres were most likely to offer individual careers advice and to use the Local Education Authority careers advisor (Appendix 6.422 and 6.423). Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to offer group careers advice (Appendix 6.424). These centres were also most likely to offer advice on how the students could use their portfolio after the end of their programme (Appendix 6.425). City & Guilds centres were most likely to offer students advice on their current GNVQ achievements including unit certification (Appendix 6.426 and 6.427) but least likely to provide individual careers advice or advice on using the portfolio after the course.

City & Guilds centres were most likely to negotiate individual programmes for students to complete their GNVQ (Appendix 6.428). Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to offer separate workshops on completing the assessment records or portfolios with City & Guilds and BTEC centres less likely offer these workshops (Appendix 6.429). This discrepancy may have again been due to the influence of the responses from RSAEB centres. RSAEB centres were most likely to offer fast track

completion (Appendix 6.430). BTEC centres were much more likely to include visits to/from FE, HE or industry, HE applications, employment applications and the selection of a non-GNVQ course (Appendix 6.431 - 6.434). City & Guilds centres were most likely to include FE applications (Appendix 6.435). Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include HE applications and the selection of a non-GNVQ course and least likely to include visits to other institutions. RSAEB centres were least likely to include FE applications, HE applications, employment applications and progression to either non-GNVQ courses or the next level GNVQ (Appendix 6.436). This provided a slightly negative picture of progression routes for students attending these centres.

The influence of GNVQ experience on the exit phase

Centres with the most approval experience and franchise or consortium experience were most likely to include group careers advice (Appendix 6.437). As approval experience increased centres were more likely to include advice on using the portfolio after the course, GNVQ achievements and unit certification (Appendix 6.438 - 6.440). Centres with franchise or consortium experience were least likely to include all other aspects of advice and guidance. As approval experience increased centres were more likely to negotiate individual programmes for completion, offer workshops on completing assessment records or portfolios and fast-track completion (Appendix 6.441 - 6.443). This reflected a growing ability to manage the more GNVQ specific aspects of the programme. However, centres with franchise or consortium experience were most likely to offer fast track completion. Progression routes were also affected by approval experience. As approval experience increased centres were more likely to include FE, HE and employment applications and selection of the next level GNVQ programme (Appendix 6.444 - 6.447). The rise in HE applications and the selection of the next level GNVQ could be related to how centres phased in the different levels, expanding their provision to Advanced level programmes in their second and third years of operation. This would ultimately provide the potential for progression to HE and the next level GNVQ. Overall, employment applications were initially a much higher priority than HE applications. Centres with franchise or

consortium experience were most likely to include FE applications and less likely to include all other exit activities.

The influence of previous vocational experience on the exit phase

As previous vocational experience increased the use of individual careers advice decreased and the use of group careers advice increased (Appendix 6.448 and 6.449). Centres with more previous vocational experience were more likely to include advice on how to use the portfolio after the course, advice on GNVQ achievements and unit certification (Appendix 6.450 - 6.452). They were also more likely to negotiate individual programmes in order to complete GNVQs (Appendix 6.453). However, only the most experienced centres were more likely to include a fast-track option in the exit phase (Appendix 6.454). Opportunities to progress from GNVQ to another course or the next level GNVQ increased as previous vocational experience increased (Appendix 6.455 and 6.456). This could indicate that the most experienced continued to offer a range of programmes in addition to GNVQs.

The exit phase for Major and Minor league GNVQs

Art & Design programmes had a number of differences compared to other Major league GNVQs. They were slightly more likely to include use of the local authority careers advisor and group careers advice compared to other vocational programmes (Appendix 6.457 and 6.458), and include workshops on completing assessment records or portfolios and to offer a fast-track completion (Appendix 6.459 and 6.460). Portfolios were already used in Art and therefore there might not have been such a great need to explain the use of a portfolio (Appendix 6.461). Health & Social Care programmes were more likely to include visits to/from potential progression routes and least likely to include HE applications (Appendix 6.462 and 6.463). Art & Design programmes were most likely to include FE applications and selection of non-GNVQ programmes or the next level of GNVQ for progression (Appendix 6.464 - 6.466). Leisure and Tourism programmes were most likely to include HE and employment applications as part of the exit phase (Appendix 6.467). This was in contrast to

previous findings that Art & Design staff saw HE as the major progression route (FEU, 1993).

Business programmes were least likely to include FE applications and the select of a non-GNVQ course.

There were some differences within the Minor league group and between Minor league and Major league GNVQs. Information Technology programmes were most likely to include both individual and group careers advice (Appendix 6.468 and 6.469). Engineering programmes were least likely to include individual careers advice. Compared to Major league GNVQs Minor league GNVQs were less likely to include use of the local authority careers advisor and this aspect appeared to decline in priority as the popularity of the vocational area decreased (Appendix 6.470). Information Technology programmes were most likely to include advice on using the portfolio after the course and on GNVQ achievements (Appendix 6.471 and 6.472). Manufacturing programmes were more likely to include advice on unit certification (Appendix 6.473). Engineering programmes were much less likely to advise on GNVQ achievements and less likely to advise on unit certification. Compared to Major league GNVQs, all of the Minor league GNVQs were more likely to include advice as a high or very high priority. Information Technology programmes were also most likely to include workshops on assessment records and portfolios, and a fast track option but less likely to negotiate individual programmes (Appendix 6.474 - 6.476). Manufacturing programmes were least likely to include a fast track completion. Engineering programmes were much less likely to include workshops on completing assessment records or portfolios.

Manufacturing programmes were most likely to include visits to/from other institutions, complete FE applications and select the next level GNVQ as part of the exit phase (Appendix 6.477 - 6.479). They were least likely to include HE and employment applications or selection of a non-GNVQ course (Appendix 6.480 - 6.482). Previous research had shown that progression for Manufacturing students was unlikely to be to HE (FEU, 1993). Engineering programmes were most likely to include the selection of a non-GNVQ course and least likely to include visits to other institutions and FE

applications. Information Technology programmes were most likely to include HE and employment applications.

The influence of lead-in time on the exit phase

Both the use of the local authority careers advisor and group careers advice increased in priority as the lead-in time increased (Appendix 6.483 and 6.484). Centres with a lead-in time of 4 - 6 months were most likely to include advice on using the portfolio after the course and on GNVQ achievements, negotiation of individual programmes, include workshops on completing the assessment records or portfolios and employment applications (Appendix 6.485 - 6.489). Advice on unit certification was less likely to be included by centres with the shortest lead-in time (Appendix 6.490). As the lead-in time increased centres were more likely to include FE applications, HE applications and the selection of a non-GNVQ course (Appendix 6.491 - 6.493). The inclusion of the selection of the next level GNVQ also increased up until a lead-in time of seven to ten months (Appendix 6.494).

Summary of the exit phase

Advice and guidance were a higher priority than a number of GNVQ specific aspects of the exit phase. Individual approaches rose in priority in this phase. There were a number of differences between different types of centre. Whilst centres provided a range of advice and completion activities access to potential progression routes differed. This had implications for a students' choice of centre. School students were most likely to progress to FE. This could have been due to a desire to progress to the next level of GNVQ but there being no provision at the school. Students who attended Schools and aspired to HE may also have been progressing to FE in order to access this route. The advice and completion activities offered by FE Colleges focused on the nature of GNVQ as opposed to Schools and Sixth Form Colleges that tended to focus their advice on what happened after the programme. Sixth Form Colleges had fewer individual approaches compared to other centres. FE Colleges offered

the broadest access to progression compared to other types of centres. Other Institutions were frequently the least likely to offer each type of progression route but this may have been influenced by the circumstances of their particular student group and the range of courses offered.

With reference to awarding bodies there was no overall pattern of provision and no awarding body was more likely to offer a 'better' exit phase compared to the others. In some instances BTEC centres and centres with Multiple approvals were at opposite ends of the continuum in relation to what was provided in the exit phase. In other instances, City & Guilds and RSAEB centres showed a complete contrast in provision. BTEC centres were more likely to focus on advice and guidance, HE and employment as a higher priority. City & Guilds centres tended to focus on the actual achievements of the students, the completion of their qualification and progression to either the next level GNVQ or to FE. RSAEB centres had fewer distinct priorities in the exit phase compared to other awarding bodies. They were least likely to include most of the aspects listed in the exit phase indicating that their provision was less developed than other awarding bodies. This did not reflect the findings for specific types of centres and therefore could only be attributed to differences between awarding bodies.

As centre approval experience increased many aspects were more likely to be included as a high or very high priority in the exit phase. Centres with franchise or consortium experience were as likely to include group careers advice, individual careers advice and fast-track completion but were least likely to include other types of advice and guidance, negotiation and access to some progression routes. Their provision was less developed even when compared to the newest centres. The previous vocational experience of centres also had an effect on a number of aspects of the exit phase. Overall, centres with less approval or previous vocational experience would have benefited from more support in providing advice and access to some of the progression routes.

For the most part, differences between vocational areas were negligible but a pattern did emerge. The exit phase for Art & Design programmes was more developed compared to other vocational areas. They included more guidance and advice on careers and completion, fast-track option and exit routes

that were more focused on progression to other courses. There were also some differences in Health & Social Care and Leisure & Tourism reflecting different priorities for advice and guidance, negotiation and progression routes. Information Technology programmes had a number of differences in their exit phase compared to other vocational areas. This vocational area was characterised by the lack of advice and guidance and restricted exit routes.

Centres with the shortest lead-in time were the least likely to include all aspects of the exit phase with the exception of individual careers advice and visits to/from FE, HE and Industry. Less than 70 per cent of these centres included advice and access to potential progression routes for their students. Centres with a lead-in time of four to six months were more likely to include GNVQ specific advice which focused on the completion of the programmes. Centres with longest lead-in times were more likely to focus on the progression opportunities for the students.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ASSESSMENT OF GNVQS

Introduction

Assessment should have been linked to the course structure with staff identifying the main activities or assignments in relation to each unit or element (NCVQ et al, 1995). This should have led to an overall assessment plan for the programme which identified long term, short term, group and individual targets and encouraged students to participate in their own assessment. Assessment plans, assignments and activities should have catered for individual needs including the provision of additional assessment opportunities as appropriate. Staff also needed to decide how key skills would be assessed and the level of integration that would be used within the vocational units and between the vocational and key skill units.

GNVQ assessment specified that students pass 100 per cent of the requirements which included the evidence indicators (for vocational and key skill units), and, if appropriate, the grading criteria. The requirement for 100 per cent assessment for the portfolio added to the complexity of the assessment requirements (ED, 1994) and the resultant systems and procedures were found to be complex, time consuming, bureaucratic and paper laden rendering assessment unmanageable (ED, 1994). Previous research resulted in severe criticism of assessment and calls for major changes to the criteria, systems and requirements (ED, 1994). Assessment did not take account of the delivery of the programmes or the time constraints with the assessment driving the delivery (ED, 1994; Young et al, 1995). The mapping of key skills into the assessment process was also problematic and more time was needed to develop assignments (Young et al, 1995). Although staff were writing their own assignments some were found to be inappropriate particularly in inexperienced centres (FEFC, 1994).

Integration of assessment criteria was very difficult due to the design of GNVQs and, even though they were aware that integration had the potential to reduce the assessment burden, most centres resorted to unit or element based assessment (ED, 1994). This chapter examines who initiated assignments, whether assessments were at element or unit level, whether integration was used in the assessment process, and the use of deadlines, negotiation and feedback within the assessment process.

Assessment practice

Table 7.1 shows that most centres controlled the timing and writing of assignments. However, it was possible that students gained more influence over the assignments as programmes progressed.

Predetermined assessment deadlines were widely used although 75 per cent of centres also negotiated assessment deadlines. This may have been indicative of the large amount of work to be assessed and that students found it difficult to produce the amount of work required within the timescales.

Table 7.1

Timing and writing of assignments

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
Assignments and deadlines	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Staff initiate timing of and writing of assignment briefs	273	91.3	19	6.4	7	2.3	299	100.0
Predetermined assessment deadlines	261	87.3	31	10.4	7	2.3	299	100.0
Negotiated assessment deadlines	227	75.9	67	22.4	5	1.7	299	100.0

Most staff had problems integrating Application of Number (FEU, 1994b) and key skill evidence as a whole was problematic (few staff were confident about judging the standard), with the assessment of evidence often left until late in the programmes (Ofsted, 1994). Table 7.2 shows that slightly more centres were integrating assessment than integrating delivery (the integration of key skills in assessment rose by 10 per cent compared to the delivery phase). However, few centres integrated

assignments across the vocational units confirming the unit by unit approach identified in the delivery phase.

Table 7.2

The use of integration in assignments

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Integration								
Assignments are integrated across vocational units	85	28.4	208	69.6	6	2.0	299	100.0
Key skills are integrated into vocational assignments	263	88.0	32	10.7	4	1.3	299	100.0

Previous reports noted that the majority of students were confused about assessment, including grading, and this confusion was compounded by the lack of regular or effective feedback and an over-reliance on oral feedback which resulted in many students not knowing how they were progressing in the early stages of programmes (Ofsted, 1994). This was indicative of the complexity of the assessment activities which in turn led to a high level of resubmissions and gap filling (ED, 1994). Table 7.3 shows that feedback on assignments was a high or very high priority in the programmes in almost all centres. However, group feedback on assignments was also widely used indicating that there were probably aspects of the feedback relevant or common to all students. This may also confirm the findings of a high use of oral feedback with tutors providing oral feedback to entire groups. Three quarters of centres included assignment resubmissions¹. This figure was very high, the conclusion being that only a quarter of centres ‘passed’ assignments or assessment activities as sufficient and complete at the required standard when they were first submitted whilst three quarters of centres were reassessing assignments. Alternatively, some students may not have had access to further opportunities for assessment in order to complete work. There was a likelihood that some reassessments would over-run into the next assessment period creating a treadmill effect as

¹ This figure may have varied according to the phase of the programmes.

assessment and reassessment went on and on throughout the programmes for both students and staff as work was revisited and reassessed.

Table 7.3

Feedback on assignments and resubmissions

	Featured highly or very highly		Not a priority or unlikely to be included		No response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Feedback and resubmissions								
Individual assignment feedback	294	98.3	0	0.0	5	1.7	299	100.0
Group assignment feedback	244	81.6	46	15.4	9	3.0	299	100.0
Assignment resubmissions	225	75.3	62	20.7	12	4.0	299	100.0

Assessment in different types of centre

Overall, all centres had more staff control than student choice although staff in Schools were slightly less likely to initiate the timing and writing of assignments (Appendix 7.1). Sixth Form Colleges and Other Institutions were least likely to include predetermined assessment deadlines (Appendix 7.2). FE Colleges were most likely to include predetermined assessment deadlines and least likely to allow negotiation of deadlines (Appendix 7.3). Other Institutions were most likely to negotiate assessment deadlines.

FE Colleges were most likely to integrate assignments across vocational units but the least likely to integrate the key skills (Appendix 7.4 and 7.5). Whilst Sixth Form Colleges were a lot less likely to integrate assignments across the vocational units they were most likely to integrate key skills. If the assessment was different in this respect then there was the underlying possibility that there may have been differences between centres in terms of standards and the degree of difficulty in the assignment or assessment activities used. All centres included individual assignment feedback as a high priority irrespective of centre type (Appendix 7.6). Sixth Form Colleges were most likely to include

assignment resubmissions but least likely to offer group assignment feedback although this was quite widely used in all centres (Appendix 7.7 and 7.8). Other Institutions were most likely to use group assignment feedback.

The influence of awarding body approval on assessment

BTEC centres and those with Multiple approvals were most likely to have staff initiating the timing and writing of assignments, to use predetermined assessment deadlines and least likely to negotiate assessment deadlines (Appendix 7.9 - 7.11). City & Guilds centres were three times more likely to have staff control as a low priority and were most likely to negotiate assessment deadlines although RSAEB centres were the only centres to place negotiated assessment deadlines as a slightly higher priority than predetermined assessment deadlines. BTEC centres were most likely to integrate assessment across the vocational units and the key skills (Appendix 7.12 and 7.13) with RSAEB centres least likely to integrate assessment across the vocational units and City & Guilds centres least likely to integrate the assessment of the key skills. All centres included individual assignment feedback as a high priority irrespective of awarding body approval (Appendix 7.14). A quarter of RSAEB centres noted that assignment resubmissions were not a priority or a low priority which was higher than for the other awarding bodies (Appendix 7.15). Nearly a fifth of RSAEB centres had a low priority for or no group assignment feedback but they were no more likely to include individual assignment feedback (Appendix 7.16). This may indicate that these students were overall, receiving less feedback than other students or that, as with other aspects of GNVQ, RSAEB centres were slightly behind in their development. Centres with Multiple approvals were most likely to include group assignment feedback and assignment resubmissions.

The influence of GNVQ experience on assessment

Negotiated assessment deadlines decreased in priority as centre approval experience increased (Appendix 7.17). This could have been due to increased pressure to ensure completion of the full qualification. As centre approval experience increased centres were more likely to have staff

initiating and writing assignments and to use predetermined assessment deadlines (Appendix 7.18 and 7.19). They were more likely to integrate assignments across vocational units but there was no effect on the integration of key skills (Appendix 7.20 and 7.21). As approval experience increased group assignment feedback decreased as a priority but assignment resubmissions increased in priority (Appendix 7.22 and 7.23). The newest centres were least likely to include individual assignment feedback (Appendix 7.24). Centres with franchise or consortium experience were as likely as new centres to have staff initiating the timing and writing of assignments and to integrate across the vocational units. They were most likely to negotiate assessment deadlines and to integrate key skills but least likely to use group assignment feedback. The latter may have been influenced by the structure and style adopted for the management of groups being assessed across a number of centres.

The influence of previous vocational experience on assessment

As previous vocational experience increased centres were more likely to include predetermined assessment deadlines, integrate assignments across vocational units and include assignment resubmissions but the integration of key skills was unaffected (Appendix 7.25 - 7.28). The use of group assignment feedback only increased for those centres with the most previous vocational experience (Appendix 7.29).

Assessment for Major and Minor league GNVQs

Leisure and Tourism programmes were more likely to include predetermined assessment deadlines and less likely to negotiate these deadlines (Appendix 7.30 and 7.31). Of the Minor league GNVQs Information Technology programmes were most likely to include predetermined assessment and negotiated deadlines (Appendix 7.32 and 7.33) but much less likely to integrate assessment across the vocational units, particularly when compared to the Major league GNVQs (Appendix 7.34). The Minor league GNVQs were more than twice as likely to integrate the assessment of key skills with the vocational units compared to the integration of assessment across the vocational units (Appendix

7.35). Individual assignment feedback was a high priority for all of the Minor league GNVQs (Appendix 7.36). Manufacturing programmes were more likely to include assignment resubmissions but least likely to include group assignment feedback (Appendix 7.37 and 7.38).

The influence of lead-in time on assessment

Negotiated assessment deadlines were most likely to be included by those centres with the shortest lead-in time (Appendix 7.39). Whilst integration across vocational units increased as the lead-in time increased, the integration of key skills was more likely to be included with a lead-in of four to six months (Appendix 7.40 and 7.41). Centres with the shortest lead-in times were least likely to integrate aspects of assessment. As lead-in time increased the use of group assignment feedback and assignment resubmissions increased (Appendix 7.42 and 7.43).

Summary of assessment

The design of GNVQs was highly influential on the assessment process and, overall, had a negative effect on the approaches used. Although most centres included integration as a high priority for key skills, far fewer sought to reduce their workload by integrating assessment across the vocational units. This was probably related to the complexity of the qualification and that, initially, the development of this approach would have required a considerable amount of time to design, implement and record. The high priority for group feedback on assessment was probably indicative of common issues that arose from the design of GNVQs and, subsequently, the design of assessment activities and assignments. In this instance, students should have benefited from the group feedback and this should have enabled some standardization to take place.

There were differences between types of centres in the levels of integration used in the assessment process. Contrary to awarding body advice and requirements nearly 20 per cent of FE Colleges had a low or no priority for the integration of key skills. Sixth Form Colleges had more in common with FE

Colleges than other centres including higher levels of integration which should have reduced the potential for a repetitious and piece meal approach to assessment. FE Colleges showed high levels of integration in assessment and staff control. These different models of assessment may have contributed to what were perceived as differences in standards between types of centres.

Differences between awarding bodies reflected different levels of control and negotiation with assessment in City & Guilds centres being more integrated and student oriented and RSAEB centres being less developed in some aspects. BTEC centres used a higher level of staff control and had more integration in assessment. Centres with Multiple approvals appeared to have a balance of provision.

GNVQ approval experience and, to a lesser extent, previous vocational experience had the greatest and most positive effect on the assessment provision. There were some differences between vocational areas, more so in the Minor league GNVQs. There were no differences between the Major league and Minor league GNVQs in the way staff initiated and wrote assignments, used assessment resubmissions and individual assessment feedback but Major league GNVQs usually had a more integrated approach to assessment. In a small number of instances, Information Technology showed some of the characteristics of Major league GNVQs. For example, the increased use of integration of assignments across vocational units and integration of key skills in assignments. Both Major league and Minor league GNVQs had mixed provision for how predetermined assessment deadlines and negotiated assessment deadlines were included.

Lead-in time affected the development of the assessment process. Some aspects were more likely to be included as a higher priority as the lead-in time increased. However, a lead-in time of four to six months had less influence on assessment compared to the effect it had on other phases of the programmes.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

GNVQs were an extension of the interventionist approach first developed in TVEI. Whereas TVEI was a funded programme of change based on a national framework which was used to develop local provision, GNVQs were a complex and complete qualification imposed on all institutions by the government. The researcher agrees with Ecclestone that GNVQs were

“ --- arguably the most ambitious initiative in the history of post-16 education and training. “ (Ecclestone, 2000 p.539).

This research showed a mixed picture of implementation for GNVQs as at 1995. The notion of liberation had not been achieved. Instead, centres were entangled in complex and bureaucratic structures, procedures and requirements. The research was able to establish the extent to which these issues were related to the type of institution, awarding body approval, GNVQ approval experience, previous vocational experience, different vocational areas and the lead-in time prior to the introduction of GNVQs. Some of the early reports (for example, ED, 1992) were proved to be idealistic and lacking in detailed feedback or advice on the implications of introducing GNVQs.

Achieving the aims of GNVQs

GNVQs did not sit squarely between NVQs and academic qualifications as had been originally planned. The changes that were implemented and the packages of qualifications offered with GNVQs showed that

there was ongoing academic drift. This had the effect of creating an imbalance within the Qualifications Framework with an academic route, a hybrid academic/pre-vocational qualification and the purely vocational NVQs creating a new tripartite system. The tensions already identified in the framework (Hodkinson and Mattinson, 1994) had grown by 1995 and contributed to GNVQs being pulled closer towards academic qualifications. GNVQs failed to bridge the academic/vocational divide. Instead they have bridged the GCSE/A level divide allowing students to pursue an alternative qualification to GCSE resits. GNVQs were supposed to allow students to develop relevant knowledge and understanding (and to gain an appreciation of how to apply these at work), provide broad preparation for work and, initially, required the demonstration of a range of skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to related occupations. The research established that it was unlikely that these aims were met to any great extent.

Whilst links with the world of work were seen to be important:

“ The run-up to the more widespread adoption of GNVQs will provide an opportunity to develop and exploit the resources of the local industrial community — . “ (Sutton, 1994 p.344)

this research showed that these were limited and dependent on the type of centre. Further research would be required to establish to what extent the skills, knowledge and understanding required by work were actually included in the programmes or assessment activities.

GNVQs were to be a dual purpose qualification being an acceptable route to HE or work. The FEU (1994b) found little evidence to support this and Ainley (1995) thought that this aim was too ambitious. This research found that, although all centres offered opportunities to progress to work, there was a slight bias towards progression to HE. It is also possible that those going on to FE may have been using this as a stepping stone to HE. GNVQs were the latest attempt to create parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications. They were to be of equal standing with academic qualifications at the same

level and represent a real alternative to academic qualifications for the increasing numbers staying on in education. It is doubtful whether this aim could ever be achieved whilst the target audience and entry requirements were different to those for the academic equivalent courses. The research showed that, to a large extent, GNVQs were used as an alternative qualification for students with lower achievements who were unsuitable for A levels and for whom GCSE results were failing. NCVQ appeared to be unable to create a qualification that had parity of esteem with academic qualifications without being forced to adopt more academic characteristics.

GNVQs were to be clearly related to the occupationally specific NVQs. The design of GNVQs may have originally reflected some relationship but this was partially eroded by the ongoing changes. The research did not gather evidence on numbers progressing to NVQs but some of the students progressing to work could have been accessing NVQs via further training schemes. There was also little evidence of GNVQs being offered in combination with NVQs. As well as being related to NVQs, GNVQs were supposed to be distinctive enough to ensure that there was no confusion between the two qualifications and this appeared to have been achieved.

GNVQs were to be suitable for use by full-time students in colleges, and if appropriate, schools¹. From the pilot phase through to the time of the research there was never been any real attempt to limit the number of schools offering GNVQs. There were no approval criteria focusing on this aspect and awarding bodies did not refuse approval according to the type of institution. Schools' enthusiasm for GNVQs showed their growing need to access an alternative qualification for a number of students remaining in education post-16. The reality was that the development of GNVQs in schools was vital if they were to make a significant contribution to the NTETs. However, looking at the reasons for introducing GNVQs it can be seen that the NTETs were largely irrelevant at institutional level. Irrespective of government policy, they did not influence centres to introduce GNVQs.

¹ Schools were judged to have few opportunities to allow students to demonstrate competence in the work place, initially thought as being an essential part of GNVQs.

GNVQs were to provide qualifications in broad vocational areas. Initially, it was found that

“ There is considerable diversity in the GNVQs on offer with Further Education offering a much wider range, to far more students, than Schools.” (ED, 1992 p.2)

Whilst this diversity would have been relative to the number of vocational areas and levels available that year this research found that in 1995 there was little diversity in the provision outside FE institutions. Although fourteen vocational areas were developed the popularity of Business, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism, and Art and Design had hardly changed in the first three years of availability confirming previous findings (Hyland and Weller, 1994; FEU, 1994b; Green and Ainley, 1995). This research established that there was a definite division in the popularity of the different vocational areas which was not necessarily dependent on the ‘age’ of the qualification or the levels offered. This resulted in what could be seen as Major and Minor league GNVQs. Major league GNVQs were, in order of popularity, Business, Health & Social Care, Leisure and Tourism and Art & Design. They were most likely to be offered at two or three levels and had similar patterns of provision with some small differences within the group. This indicated a certain amount of stability in these vocational areas. All other vocational areas were considered to be Minor league GNVQs. These vocational areas had different patterns of provision compared to the Major league and, in some instances, considerable differences within the group. For example, Information Technology programmes lacked many features of the others. Overall, Minor league GNVQs appeared less established or stable. It would have taken considerable investment in staff training, equipment and facilities for the less popular vocational areas to be made available to more students. However, Part One may have provided a partial solution to this problem². Of the Minor league GNVQs only Information Technology appeared to be capable of breaking into the Major league.

² Part One approval was highly regulated and controlled by the DfEE. Care was taken to encourage centres to offer less popular vocational areas such as Manufacturing (Appendix 8.1).

Finally, GNVQs would be a major cultural change for schools and colleges. After the criticisms of GNVQs (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994) it was noted that

“ GNVQ programmes involve the management of change. This change relates to the curriculum, assessment and programme structure. “ (Bowyer, 1995 p.18)

Unfortunately, it was widely felt that, as long as senior managers were involved in the implementation and development, the changes required would be facilitated. This research found that the extent to which centres adopted and adapted GNVQs and the requirements of the Quality Framework, showed that there was little cultural change. GNVQs were quite literally made to fit into the existing provision irrespective of senior management involvement. The culture of the centres resulted in them reaching a plateau in the development of their provision by the second or third year of approval with centres experiencing considerable difficulty in developing ‘good practice’ beyond a certain point of implementation. The unprecedented chaos in development added to this problem as centres strove to implement a considerable number of ongoing changes. This probably contributed to the piecemeal implementation found in the research. Aspects that were changed (for example, grading) were found to be most difficult to implement and to achieve. A further problem was the top down management approach used for the introduction of GNVQs³. This led to further problems of implementation (previously identified by Brandes and Ginnis, 1986) and staff development was not enough to instigate or support the cultural shift dictated by the requirements of GNVQs.

Ecclestone (2000) over simplified the differences between schools and colleges. FE Colleges may have found some aspects of GNVQ easier to implement but they shared some common problems with other types of centres and, additionally, were less likely to implement some aspects. It is also feasible that NCVQ, Ofsted, FEFC, FEU and awarding bodies made hurried decisions in identifying what was good

³ Government policy was forced upon institutions.

practice and failed to fully understand the implications of encouraging some of the approaches which this research later found to be inappropriate and/or unachievable. Although centres were still enthusiastic about GNVQs in principle and numbers of centres and students continued to grow, few of the aims of the White Paper had been achieved.

Distinctive features of GNVQ

The majority of centres in the research had their own centre approval. Although centres were required to meet specific criteria in order to gain approval to offer GNVQs, the research showed that centres met some of these criteria to varying degrees and gained approval irrespective of where they were in terms of developing specific aspects. The previous year it had been recommended that there were

“ --- common criteria and consistency of interpretation over the approval of centres -- . “ (FEFC, 1994 p.28)

This research showed that this development may not have entirely resolved the emerging issues. If the criteria had initially been strictly applied it is conceivable that a number of centres would not have been approved to offer GNVQs and that more franchise and consortium arrangements would have developed⁴. Ongoing approval appeared to be granted on a sliding scale of development and implementation with no clear patterns appearing as to whether certain aspects were judged as more important than others or where centres were expected to be in relation to their experience. This suggests that the awarding bodies had as many problems with implementing and monitoring the complex and bureaucratic requirements as the centres.

Most centres used consistent entry requirements at all levels irrespective of the vocational area although

⁴ This would have potentially created further problems as these centres lacked development.

the target audience and entry requirements for GNVQs varied. The extent to which diagnostic assessment was used also varied according to centre type and experience but it was rarely linked to entry requirements⁵. Where there were lower than recommended or no entry requirements, programmes were more basic and lacked advice, guidance and selection processes in all phases. Centres rarely used a range of evidence of previous achievement within their entry requirements. Lower entry requirements at all levels were indicative of an August/September admission and induction. When unspecified GCSEs were the entry requirement, centres were most likely to include an interview as part of the induction process. There were further differences in entry requirements according to the levels offered. Formal entry requirements were rare at Foundation level. If no Foundation level was available in a centre then they were four times more likely to have no entry requirements at Intermediate level, providing evidence to support previous concerns (FEU, 1994b; FEFC, 1994) regarding the recruitment of weaker students to Intermediate level. Over three quarters of centres offering Intermediate level had no, low or unspecified entry requirements. This showed that there had been little change since 1992 when

“ Nearly all centres are operating open access to level two programmes. “ (ED, 1992 p.12)

and more recently that

“ There were few examples of well-defined criteria for the selection of students at Intermediate level. “
(Ofsted, 1994 p.29)

The entry requirements of centres suggested that Intermediate level students may have needed more flexible courses in terms of either the centre having the capacity to increase the amount of delivery time per week or the course being extended beyond the academic year (by implementing flexible admission and exit times). If centres were offering the programmes with less than the recommended fifteen to twenty hours it was difficult to see how they accommodated all the activities and approaches they noted as a high

⁵ Diagnostic assessment was not confined to the induction phase but was also used in the delivery phase.

priority for delivery. Further research would be required to explore any link between entry requirements and standards. However, it is interesting to note Ofsted's findings (1994) that standards were more variable at Intermediate level.

Earlier research found that

“ Minimum entry requirements at level three varied. “ (ED, 1992 p.12)

This was confirmed later by Chorlton (1994). In this research, entry requirements at Advanced level did not vary greatly and were much more likely to be based on the recommendations or higher⁶. However, this finding must be viewed in the light of how entry requirements are used by centres.

“ In spite of the apparent consensus over Advanced GNVQs' target population and standard, the actual qualifications of the current Advanced GNVQ cohort differ substantially from those given by centres as their official entry criteria. “ (FEU, 1994b p.6)

To a lesser extent, there were some differences in entry requirements between vocational areas and the levels offered. The higher the level of GNVQ offered the more likely centres were to specify the recommended or higher entry requirements (three times more likely) and the more academic the package of qualifications offered to the students. Centres that offered more levels appeared more flexible in their approach to entry. This was probably related to their increased ability to place students on an appropriate level.

Whilst the FEU (1994b) found target groups were unclear, the target groups in this research appeared to be largely determined by negative entry requirements. This confirmed Pattinson's concerns (1995) that

⁶ However, there was anecdotal evidence to suggest the specified requirements were not always strictly applied in all centres.

GNVQs had not always been a positive choice. The majority of centres using lower entry requirements targeted students not suitable for academic qualifications or those who failed GCSEs (including resits). Whilst the majority of centres introduced GNVQs to meet student needs and improve provision they could not meet students' needs by placing them on programmes for which they were ill-qualified and ill-equipped. The recruitment of such a broad range of ability resulted in students starting their GNVQ from different levels and yet they were all expected to reach the same national standard within the same period of time, irrespective of the delivery time or support provided. Unless there were vastly different resources the research showed that there were no distinct differences in the programmes offered to account for how this could occur. This can only have contributed to concerns regarding national standards. This research also found that the variations in entry requirements increased as the number of centres offering a vocational area increased therefore this problem looked set to grow.

Contrary to previous findings where

“ Most schools had organised effective induction programmes. “ (Ofsted, 1994 p.29)

many centres did not implement induction requirements and appeared to be a long way from the ideal model of the Quality Framework with the earlier advice of NCVQ (1993a and b) being largely ignored. Again, there appeared to be a plateau in the development of this phase of the programmes. Centres did not appear to acknowledge the importance of induction or to have grasped the concept of induction as the cornerstone of GNVQ. The delivery phase took greater priority during the preparation of the programmes and better inductions were largely offered by centres with a lead-in time of seven to ten months. To some extent, this was understandable. Many centres offered complex induction packages although some rationalisation was evident amongst the more experienced centres. The use of previously identified good practice such as the use of assignments in induction was explored in this research.

“ In the most effective induction practice, students were set assignments which simultaneously provided an appropriate introduction to the college — . “ (FEFC, 1994 p.17)

However, the use of assignments was variable. The FEFC also found that

“ The time devoted to induction to GNVQ courses varied widely — . “ (FEFC, 1994 p.17)

This research found that the majority of inductions were far too short to realistically include or achieve the vast array of activities noted by the centres and required by the Quality Framework. Short and inadequate inductions would have created pressure later in the programmes as staff and students tried to ‘catch-up’.

Although many centres included study skills, action planning, key skills and grading criteria in the programmes, they had difficulty introducing and delivering these aspects. In some respects this appeared to be linked to the GNVQ specific nature of these requirements as well as the lead-in time. Assessment remained a complex and confusing activity and the design of GNVQs continued to have a negative effect. The research confirmed that staff still found it difficult to implement grading (Sutton, 1994) and additionally that this was not always addressed separately in the programmes or introduced during the induction phase. There were various attempts to integrate aspects such as key skills and to use different levels of staff control and student negotiation although overall, centres exerted a high level of control over the programmes. Once a student was on a programme, movements between levels were unlikely and between vocational areas were almost unheard of in any centre, confirming the findings of the FEU (1994b). There was limited flexibility and choice in the programmes until the exit phase when the negotiation of individual programmes doubled in priority for all centres. This contrasted with previous comments (City & Guilds, 1993; ED, 1993; FEU, 1993; Dearing, 1993; Sims, 1994; Ofsted, 1994; Pattinson, 1995) regarding the flexibility, the potential for students to take responsibility and the

individual nature of the programmes (thought to be motivating factors for many students). This was probably a result of the complexity of the qualification and the conflict between these approaches and the assessment requirements.

In the pilot phase it had been noted that

“ In nearly all centres, students are taking GNVQ as part of a wider programme often interfaced with modular A levels or units towards other vocational qualifications. “ (ED, 1992 p.12)

and that there was an explicit relationship being developed between academic qualifications and GNVQs (FEU, 1993). This research found that it was unlikely that students would combine GNVQs with other qualifications, academic or vocational. This was irrespective of the vocational area. GNVQs did not easily combine with other qualifications and failed to aid the development of a Credit Accumulation and Transfer system, proving to be a quite inflexible qualification. If staff struggled to implement the complex requirements of GNVQs they were hardly likely to add to their own workload by further complicating the programmes with the addition of other courses or units within GNVQs. The extent of unit accreditation was not established but the increased activity in the exit phase suggested that the focus was on full completion wherever possible. Individual approaches were most likely to be used in the exit phase as the need to ensure completion increased and students reached different stages of completion. This was probably related to the difficulties experienced with the 100 per cent plus assessment regime and the ‘tooting and froing’ of work identified in Chapter Two. Progression routes were influenced by centre type, previous vocational experience, GNVQ approval experience and the lead-in time for the programmes. All exit routes were, to some extent, available to students.

GNVQs continued to be complex to deliver and assess. Course structures went some way to meeting the requirements of the Quality Framework but appeared to be quite inflexible. Theoretically

“ GNVQ programmes are flexible and allow enrolment and testing throughout the year. “ (FEFC, 1994 p.10)

There was no evidence that flexible admission was being developed within centres except where there was a need for late recruitment to boost student numbers. GNVQs were delivered using a variety of resources and methods but the low levels of student negotiation indicated that there was only a limited amount of student-centred learning taking place. It appeared that this was more likely to be some form of active learning. There appeared to be some ongoing confusion regarding key skills and the level of integration in delivery and assessment varied according to centre type. For example, a fifth of FE Colleges did not see this as a priority. This may have been because, within their structure, key skills were delivered and/or assessed entirely separately by specialists and it was inappropriate for them to alter this established practice.

Previously, a number of centres did not use external links to support the delivery of GNVQs and links with the world of work were limited in many centres, not just colleges (FEU, 1993). This research found that although a range of resources were available in most centres, the use of external links and resources, considered to be vital for GNVQ programmes (NCVQ et al, 1995), were dependent on the type of centre.

The Quality Framework

The Quality Framework was constructed using a combination of awarding body and NCVQ requirements, and good practice identified by various agencies. The problem with this approach was that the range of good practice identified did not take account of the cultural diversity in the institutions approved to offer GNVQs. The findings of this research make it difficult to conclude that the good practice identified had been found in more than a few centres or was consistently achieved in the same centre across a range of vocational areas or programmes (including Major and Minor league GNVQs). Although the Quality

Framework was relatively new, the majority of experienced centres (those that had been offering GNVQs for two years or more) had already reached a stage where their development and implementation had slowed considerably. It was unlikely that the Quality Framework would encourage further development without the willingness of the awarding bodies to use sanctions to enforce the requirements. The latter was unlikely to occur within the competitive qualifications market. The complex structure of the Quality Framework would only add to the overall complexity of GNVQs. It is likely that the details contained in the Quality Framework simply broadened the continuum of implementation and awarding bodies continued to allow approval of centres as long as they fell into broad bands of implementation.

The organisational structures found in the research reflected the institutional structures and did not always meet the requirements of the Quality Framework. To some extent, this confirmed the previous findings of the FEU (1994b) where

“ Different institutional responses were observed according to the type of institution in which GNVQs were offered. “ (FEU, 1994b p.14)

This research established that there were also some similarities between centres and that, at times, differences could be negligible (see Differences and similarities in provision p221). Senior staff were quite widely involved in the implementation of GNVQs and all centres appeared to have a quality assurance structure in place, albeit that staff in Schools had considerable workloads within the structure, frequently having three or more roles.

The use of franchise and consortium arrangements appeared to have declined since the previous year (Arkin, 1994a). Whilst consortia and other collaborative arrangements may have had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, centres with these arrangements frequently exhibited the characteristics of new centres, irrespective of the number of years they had been operating as a centre. The research showed that

these centres were even less likely to implement the requirements of the Quality Framework. Contrary to earlier findings (ED, 1992) it was ill-advised to encourage the growth and development of such arrangements. The lack of development in these centres may have been related to them using even more complex structures for the programmes (across several institutions). This would render the centres highly dependent on developing good quality communication systems in addition to those systems required to implement GNVQs.

Initially,

“ Many centres found it valuable to hold briefing sessions for all staff involved in the delivery and management of GNVQs. “ (ED, 1992, p.10)

Later it was found that

“ Both the preparation and training of teachers for the introduction of GNVQs were variable. “ (Ofsted, 1994 p.33)

and that

“ Some colleges are devoting significant amounts of their staff development budgets to GNVQ activities. “ (FEFC, 1994 p.27)

The latter may have been related to the increased number of staff delivering and assessing GNVQs in colleges. Although staff induction appeared to be less variable and stabilising, there was still a broad range of approaches and many centres provided little or no induction for staff⁷. The short staff inductions

⁷ More than 50 per cent of centres provided an inadequate staff induction in terms of the length and 25 per cent provided no staff induction.

and lack of materials indicated that the majority of staff were ill-prepared to delivery GNVQs irrespective of the financial commitment to training. The provision of adequate staff inductions was still dependent on awarding bodies and other agencies ensuring that relevant information was available in realistic timescales for staff to familiarise themselves with changes, developments and requirements. Most centres appeared to have a reasonable time period between deciding to introduce GNVQs and admitting the first students. However, within this period it was unclear how staff induction was accommodated other than in combinations of some set times and rolling induction. The length of the staff induction influenced the length of the student induction. When there was no staff induction there was likely to be no student induction. It was not surprising then that the pattern of development showed that it was two years before a centre could be judged to be moving towards the ideal model of GNVQ as staff would have to develop their knowledge and understanding as they implemented GNVQs. However, it has already been noted that it was also at this stage that centre development slowed and reached a plateau.

Advice and guidance requirements were highly likely to be included in the programmes and many students had ongoing access to support. Many centres included this aspect in the different phases of the programmes and found it easier to achieve. This is probably related to their previous experience and the generic nature of this activity. Earlier reports found that

“ Practical approaches, work experience and clear and understandable methods of assessment including accreditation of prior learning, are motivating to students. “ (ED, 1992 p.4)

and that

“ --- some centres are using the Assessment of Prior Learning. “ (ED, 1992 p.9)

This research found that APL was not included to any great extent confirming the findings of Ofsted and the FEFC (1994). The majority of centres did not use this as part of the advice and guidance system and for those that did, it was very difficult to achieve. This was probably due to a lack of experience and a lack of guidance from NCVQ and awarding bodies who avoided creating actual links or equivalencies to enable the transfer of achievement between qualifications.

Delivery was largely determined by the centre staff (including optional units) and followed a unit by unit approach. Optional units were highly dependent on the expertise of staff. Previously it had been found that

“ Colleges detected a tension within GNVQs between pressures to integrate and encouragements to offer programmes which made maximum use of the credit accumulation potential of GNVQs. “ (FEU, 1993 p.8)

This research found that there was evidence that some centres were trying to integrate delivery across the vocational units as well as integrating the key skills. The former was more likely to occur in FE Colleges. Centres were trying to integrate assessment requirements in assignments but found this difficult. Assessment appeared to be highly centre controlled with limited amounts of negotiation. Students had the opportunity to resit unit tests as the need arose although this was slightly less of a priority in FE Colleges or RSAEB centres.

Whilst the design of a code of practice or model of implementation such as the Quality Framework, must be related to the actual qualifications, the mistake of the Quality Framework was to take this to the extreme of replicating the complex design structure of the specifications⁸. This limited the potential to implement the requirements as the Quality Framework was as difficult to understand and interpret as the

⁸ The Quality Framework could have been viewed as being more of a policy document than a realistic procedure to be implemented.

specifications. Even though there had been ongoing alterations this research found that the design issues inherited from NVQs (and identified by Hyland, 1994c), were so serious that they still greatly influenced provision. In 1995 centres were still struggling with the complexity of GNVQs and this was a greater problem than that previously identified (Nash, 1995a; Wolf, 1995).

Differences and similarities in provision

Types of centre

Early evaluations concluded that no two centres offered GNVQs in the same way (ED, 1992; FEU, 1993; WJEC, 1993; Ofsted, 1994; NCVQ, 1994d). This research showed that as well as differences in the programmes offered there were emerging patterns of provision related to the type of centre. Furthermore there was some common provision across different types of centres. This contrasted with the findings of the FEU where

“ There are major differences between schools, FE colleges and sixth-form colleges in the sort of GNVQ programmes offered. “ (FEU, 1994b p.5)

Whilst some of these differences remained, specific issues of how GNVQs were offered had not previously been explored. Differences and common patterns identified in this research included access to vocational areas and levels (which confirmed previous findings), what other courses could be studied in conjunction with GNVQs, how GNVQs were delivered and assessed, and the exit phase. These findings were probably influenced by the design of GNVQs and institutional structures and culture.

Schools introduced GNVQs to meet student needs and improve provision and used them as an alternative to A levels, bridging the GCSE/A level divide. They offered Major league GNVQs at restricted levels within an 'academic package' of qualifications. Previously Ofsted found that

“ --- schools in general have found it difficult to design courses which allow students effectively to cover all the required units and provide opportunities for the integration of core skills --- . “ (Ofsted, 1994 p.5)

A year later Schools were still finding some aspects difficult but were working to improve their provision. Whilst their student induction had some similarities with FE Colleges the delivery phase had less integration but greater potential for unit certification. They had the most varied programmes in terms of content, resources, external links and opportunities but had less learner support and were highly controlled by, and dependent on, staff expertise. These students were most likely to be progressing to FE. Schools and Sixth Form Colleges shared a number of characteristics including the limited range of vocational areas and levels offered, the academic qualifications offered with GNVQs, and their inflexible admission and induction times. Their previous experience was predominantly DVE.

FE Colleges were highly influenced by government policy and introduced GNVQs due to the demise of other courses or as a management decision. They had much longer lead-in times compared to Schools which probably affected the development of induction and exit phases to a greater extent. They offered a broad range of vocational areas and levels in a more vocationally biased package of qualifications. GNVQs in FE Colleges were thought to offer great potential to develop flexible programmes.

“ Colleges believed that the introduction of GNVQs offered colleges far greater potential to design learning programmes which were: flexible in a number of respects including programme length, mode of study and style of learning. “ (ED, 1992 p.2)

This research found that this was only partially true. Vocational delivery was highly integrated with levels of learner support. This may have been indicative of the well developed learner support system already available within FE Colleges or the possibility that they may have been admitting students with lower achievements who required higher levels of learner support. Key skills were less likely to be integrated, even though FE Colleges were most likely to include these in the student induction. Vocational delivery appeared to be less academic in style compared to Sixth Form Colleges, programmes were varied as Schools. The exit phase focused on the completion of the GNVQ itself and FE Colleges provided the broadest range of exit routes.

FE Colleges and Other Institutions shared other characteristics. They offered a wide range of vocational areas and levels, the qualifications offered with GNVQ were more vocational, they had longer and varied previous experience including NVQs and offered flexible student admission and induction. Sixth Form and FE Colleges shared some characteristics of delivery. GNVQ programmes in FE Colleges initially included high levels of student selection that gave way to high levels of staff control and lack of negotiation, high levels of integration in delivery and assessment and more non-mandatory aspects in the programmes. These programmes appeared to be very centre based with few external links.

Most Sixth Form Colleges introduced GNVQs to meet student needs and improve provision but they were twice as likely as Schools and four times as likely as FE Colleges to introduce GNVQs in order to compete. This was indicative of the climate in post-16 provision. The student induction in Sixth Form Colleges showed the greatest variation compared to other types of centre. There was greater emphasis on guidance and selection and less on assessment, which they found hard to achieve. Delivery was highly staff controlled and students had limited choice or opportunities for negotiation. Programmes were highly likely to contain only the mandatory requirements, being the most basic of all the programmes offered by different types of centre, academic in style and influenced by HE. However, they had higher levels of

integration in both delivery and assessment. The exit phase focused on what happened after the GNVQ programme.

Other Institutions showed a complete contrast to other centre types. They had very individual provision, less staff control, greater student choice and negotiation but access to fewer resources. There was less focus on the exit routes for these students. These programmes gave the impression of being 'roll-on, roll-off'.

In addition to previous findings (FEU, 1994b) where

“ The study found little evidence of centres choosing to offer GNVQs because of a definite preference for them over other pre-existing vocational or pre-vocational awards. “ (FEU, 1994b p.5)

this research found that the reasons for introducing GNVQs showed that, whilst a number of centres were forced to introduce GNVQs by government policy, many centres wanted to meet student needs and improve provision. This had the effect of moving the focus of pre-vocational qualifications away from qualifications that met the needs of industry towards qualifications that met the needs of the students. The lack of industry involvement in the programmes confirmed this change of focus.

Awarding body approval

The reasons for introducing GNVQs were sometimes related to the previous courses offered in centres and previous experience was linked to past awarding body affiliation. BTEC centres were highly influenced by the government policy to introduce GNVQs as a replacement for BTEC qualifications. City & Guilds centres were also influenced by this policy with the imminent demise of DVE influencing many centres to introduce GNVQs. BTEC and City & Guilds centres had more DVE and CPVE experience and

these programmes contributed a number of aspects and approaches to GNVQ. RSAEB centres lacked some of this experience.

BTEC and City & Guilds centres shared a number of characteristics. Staff inductions in BTEC centres were similar to those in City & Guilds centres and centres with Multiple approvals. Delivery and assessment in BTEC centres was highly centre controlled, lacked negotiation and integration, and was highly influenced by internal factors. The exit phase included a high level of advice and guidance, and exit routes were mainly to HE or employment. The delivery and assessment of City & Guilds programmes showed that there were higher levels of integration and negotiation with more informal and individual approaches. Their exit phase focused on the completion of the programme, the students' achievements and progression to either the next level GNVQ or FE.

RSAEB centres had more differences compared to the other two awarding bodies including more variations in their staff inductions. All aspects of their programmes were less well developed, from having the least consistent entry requirements to less flexibility and fewer aspects included in all phases. They also had less access to exit destinations. Whilst they were similar to City & Guilds in the levels of negotiation and staff control, their programmes were furthest from the ideal model of GNVQ. This was probably related to the previous vocational experience, with these centres having less experience of courses that contributed to the development of GNVQs. The research showed that new centres registered with RSAEB probably experienced an even steeper learning curve than other centres. This provision was in stark contrast to centres with Multiple approvals which had the highest level of development and implementation. Sutton (1994) noted that

“ There are serious reservations concerning the amount of support, at a variety of levels in the system, which is available to effect major change. “ (Sutton, 1994 p.343)

This research showed that Sutton was right to be concerned about what was a general lack of support (not just from awarding bodies). The higher the level of support the more likely centres were to implement requirements. All phases, including the student induction⁹, were a closer match to the Quality Framework requirements and provision was generally a balance of staff control and student negotiation with some individual approaches. For example, they were most likely to include key skills and grading criteria in the student induction and the delivery phase. This can only be related to the increased level of advice, guidance and verification experienced by these centres. However, centres with Multiple centre approvals were much more likely to have no entry requirements.

GNVQ and previous vocational experience

This research confirms previous concerns (Arkin, 1994a) that less experienced centres experienced a steep learning curve when introducing GNVQs. However, this was clearly related to specific aspects of the programmes and ultimately, over time, did not prevent these centres from achieving similar levels of implementation compared to more experienced centres. Experience of either previous vocational courses or GNVQ was most influential in how centres developed the content and approaches in the programmes. Although awarding bodies referred to the importance of previous experience¹⁰ this was never an absolute requirement for approval. In the initial stages centres only addressed mandatory requirements within courses. Awarding bodies and NCVQ should have considered the amount of support required by less experienced centres in the first two years of approval in order to ensure that they reached an acceptable level of provision more quickly. In this respect the awarding body external verification system proved to be extremely inflexible. It could have been a greater source of support and training and not simply, as NCVQ required, part of the quality assurance system. Alternatively, there should have been a separate support system that complemented the verification system.

⁹ No single awarding body had markedly 'better' student inductions.

¹⁰ Previous experience was a 'requirement' for the pilot centres.

As previous vocational experience increased centres offered a greater range of vocational areas and levels. Staff induction became less formal and was more likely to include the use of materials and individual approaches. Previous vocational experience had less influence on the delivery of the programmes. This was possibly because, although GNVQs utilised some aspects of previous courses, they were largely quite different in their design and requirements. However, previous experience positively affected the assessment process and the exit phase (a number of aspects became much higher priority as experience increased). The type of previous vocational experience was also influential with centres having NVQ, CPVE and/or DVE experience all fairing better in the implementation of all phases and being more likely to offer more vocational areas at more levels.

GNVQ approval experience had a considerable influence on many aspects of the programmes and provision. As approval experience increased centres offered a greater range of vocational areas and levels. Staff induction became less formal and more likely to be based on materials and individual approaches. This was probably due to centres gaining access to materials and to their increasing knowledge of, and confidence in, GNVQs. Many aspects were more likely to be included in the student induction and were easier to achieve (the exception to this was APL). This pattern of improvement continued in the delivery, assessment and exit phases of the programmes. The length of experience and contact with a number of awarding bodies directly corresponded to the increased development of the programmes. The inclusion of the more GNVQ specific aspects (e.g. grading criteria and additional units) was very dependent on these factors and in the early stages of development a centre was likely to include only mandatory requirements in the programmes. Centres with franchise or consortium arrangements continued to exhibit the characteristics of new centres irrespective of the length of their experience. This included limited provision of advice and guidance, being less likely to include specific aspects in the programmes (such as grading criteria) and poor access to some progression routes.

Lead-in time

Initially the ED found that

“ FE colleges have benefited from a more structured and long term preparation for the introduction of GNVQs than has been undertaken by schools. “ (ED, 1992 p.10)

However, the consensus was that GNVQs were introduced

“ — far too quickly without adequate consultation, preparation or planning — . “ (Hyland, 1994b p.260)

Whilst the speed of innovation and introduction reduced the preparation time available for staff (Sims, 1994) this research showed that the effects of lead-in time were more complex. When there was a lead-in time of four to six months the priority for centres was clearly preparing for the delivery of the programmes. As a consequence, the induction (staff and student) and exit phases for these centres were less well developed. These phases benefited from lead-in times of seven to ten months. However, this longer lead-in time actually resulted in some decline in the delivery of the programmes, the preparation for this phase being affected by the development of the induction and the exit phase. The longest lead-in times (eleven months or more) most benefited the exit phase and assessment, leading to an increased emphasis on progression and the inclusion of more aspects in assessment. Lead-in time clearly influenced the priorities for preparation of the programmes.

Major and Minor league GNVQs

Contrary to previous findings (Ofsted, 1994; FEFC, 1994) this research did not find many great differences between vocational areas. Major league GNVQs were a closer match to the Quality

Framework but Minor league GNVQs had more individual approaches. This may have been due to smaller group numbers allowing the development of more flexible approaches to delivery and assessment. Minor league GNVQs had longer inductions but these were within more complex induction packages. They were less likely to integrate aspects of the programmes either in delivery or assessment. Manufacturing shared some similarities with the Major league GNVQs for delivery (reflecting the effects of greater GNVQ experience as this was one of the original pilot areas), but also had some different provision to all other vocational areas. *Information Technology* had some similarities with the Major league GNVQs (how induction was managed and the increased use of formal approaches). As the popularity of the vocational area decreased the inclusion of some aspects of the programmes also decreased. Major league GNVQs were more likely to integrate delivery and assessment, offer a range of resources, use industry, use action planning for learning, inform students of unit certification and provide a range of exit destinations.

Art & Design centres had more CPVE experience generally and at Advanced level had more NVQ experience. They were more likely to have different entry requirements and allow students to select aspects of the programmes. They were slightly more likely to offer a termly induction, include informal aspects and have longer student inductions. The exit phase was more developed than the other vocational areas and as such more likely to include GNVQ specific aspects, guidance and advice on careers and completion, and a fast-track option. Progression routes were more focused on the academic than employment.

Discrepancies in standards in Leisure and Tourism noted by Ofsted (1994) could not be entirely explained by differences found in the Leisure and Tourism provision. However, these programmes did have some differences compared to other Major league GNVQs. The staff and student inductions for these programmes were similar to the Minor league GNVQs. This could have been the starting point for the differences in standards. If this is the case then it means that the induction process was even more

important than anyone had previously acknowledged. Health & Social Care and Leisure and Tourism centres had different priorities for the exit phase compared to other vocational areas.

General comments

GNVQs failed to acknowledge the problems of previous vocational qualifications and were rapidly drawn into the pattern of complex and detailed checklists associated with outcomes based assessment. The researcher agrees with previous findings regarding the effects of the complexity of GNVQs (Young et al, 1995) but shows how some aspects from previous initiatives have been adapted and adopted with greater ease compared to the more innovative aspects of GNVQs. The research also shows that the complexity of delivery, the course requirements, and the characteristics of centres are key to implementation issues in GNVQ. The changes to the specifications did not resolve the design issues or reduce the effects of the complexity. Contrary to previous research (ED, 1994), this research shows that it is not just the complexity of the assessment process but a combination of the complexity of the whole qualification forced upon a range of institutions with different cultures. GNVQs were not an institutional approach to change (Dearing, 1993). The research confirmed that GNVQs needed institutions to change to achieve all of the requirements but that ultimately, the institutional structures and culture proved to be stronger than that of GNVQs. The lack of exemplar materials and clear guidance (Ofsted, 1994) were ultimately less influential. All types of centre experienced some problems *in implementing and developing the* programmes. Overall, there was no one type of centre that offered a 'better' model of GNVQ but different types and styles of programmes were offered. However, differences were such that they could have influenced students' selection of institution.

GNVQs were an inappropriate vehicle to achieve the aims of the White Paper. To some extent they appear to have followed the pattern of previous vocational and pre-vocational qualifications in attracting lower qualified students. However, GNVQs have succeeded in attracting large numbers from the

intermediate group and therefore can be judged to be more successful. GNVQ was clearly evolving as and aligned with academic qualifications, being offered as an alternative to academic qualifications at the same level. The limited number of vocational areas offered will add to the lack of development of qualifications for specific industries and therefore will affect England's economic competitiveness in these industries. *This is also true of the lack of development of offering GNVQs in combination with other qualifications, particularly NVQs.* The six point agenda (Boswell, 1994) can almost be viewed as a interim measure in seeking to remedy the emerging problems. This research proved that the problems within GNVQ were too deep seated to be resolved by the action points and required a complete redesign of the qualification and how it was delivered, implemented and monitored.

GNVQs 1996 - 2000

Introduction

Since the data was collected GNVQs have continued to grow in popularity with both student and centre numbers increasing. The range of levels and vocational areas offered have also increased although the Major league GNVQs still dominate provision¹. The piecemeal alterations to the specifications ceased in 1996 as the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA²) sought to pilot new versions of GNVQs. This left centres coping with what remained a complex and bureaucratic qualification. This chapter summarises the history of GNVQs in the intervening years including the design of the New Model³ introduced in 2000.

Ongoing issues

Although improvements in standards were noted (Crowne, 1997) the press continued to report ongoing problems with GNVQs including those generated by the further changes (Pyke and Ward, 1996)⁴. This left GNVQs facing yet more massive changes only four years after their launch. There were further calls for the wholesale restructuring of NVQs and GNVQs (Russell and Munro, 1997) as they were still seen to be failing (Russell, 1997a). There were few links between GNVQs and NVQs, there was still an uneven take-up in vocational areas, competition between institutions was restricting the vocational areas offered and was confusing for students (FEDA et al, 1997; Merrick, 1997), some vocational areas were struggling to recruit viable numbers (Evans, 1997), conflicts between A levels and GNVQs were beginning to emerge (Dunford, 1996b), and GNVQ had developed into a sub-A

¹ The range of vocational areas and levels offered have been particularly influenced by the national availability of Part One.

² Formerly NCVQ and SCAA now merged to form the Qualifications Curriculum Authority.

³ Hereafter, the New Model refers to the model of GNVQ being introduced in Autumn 2000.

⁴ Some of this media coverage was extremely negative and sometimes ill-informed (Evans, 1997).

level option (Smithers, 1997b). On the positive side, Intermediate level was emerging as a valuable alternative to GCSE resits (FEDA et al, 1997). There were further criticisms from Smithers (1997b)⁵ regarding the odd subject combinations (for example, Leisure and Tourism) and non-existent exit routes. Other criticisms regarding problems with delivery, assessment (which still needed to be more rigorous), key skills and the lack of progression routes to employment were voiced by the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA et al, 1997⁶). Even at this stage there was talk of separating key skills from GNVQs and introducing standards moderation similar to that used in GCSE. However, others were still trying to promote the flexibility of GNVQs and their capacity to allow for different levels of achievement (Crowne, 1997).

There were attempts to use funding mechanisms to influence standards (Ward, 1996b) but after cuts in funding for Sixth Form Colleges, principals expressed concerns that this would affect both standards and parity between academic and vocational qualifications (Russell, 1997b). With reference to parity and progression there were mixed reports on the success of GNVQ as a dual purpose qualification. Employers appeared to have little confidence in GNVQs, preferring academic qualifications (Ward, 1996c). However, progression to HE was seen as being more successful even though there was now little promotion of this by NCVQ (Gibson, 1996; Nash, 1996c)⁷.

There were ongoing concerns regarding the conflicting needs and interests of FE Colleges and Schools (Ward, 1996a)⁸. Students still saw GNVQs as second class (Nash, 1996a) but this was sometimes the result of the negative image of GNVQs projected by staff (Rosenthal, 1996). NVQs were increasingly seen as the third choice in an increasingly hierarchical system of qualifications being influenced by the image of each in terms of their desirability.

⁵ Smithers still supported the notion of combining the positive aspects of GNVQs and A levels to create better qualifications (Smithers 1997b).

⁶ Formerly the Further Education Unit (FEU).

⁷ Progression to HE was not dependent on achieving a distinction grade or combining a GNVQ with an A level. Even a merit grade or a pass could enable a student to progress to HE (McGavin, 1996).

⁸ This was particularly in relation to the promotion and use of A levels and vocational qualifications for fourteen year olds (Ward, 1996a).

The number of students achieving awards at all three levels continued to grow (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1

Numbers of students achieving GNVQs 1996 - 99

Year	Number of students achieving
1996 - 97	93,000
1997 - 98	103,000
1998 - 99 ⁹	113,000

(DfEE, 2000)

Intermediate level GNVQs accounted for 45 per cent of the increase in achievements since 1997 - 98, representing the highest share of the qualifications achieved. Advanced level achievements quadrupled during the five year period 1994 - 99, with one of the fastest growing areas being Information Technology. The upward trend in registrations remained fairly constant from 1996 - 99 but the growth then levelled off. However, there were ongoing disagreements regarding the accuracy of the figures for completion (Nash, 1996b¹⁰; Carey 1996¹¹). There were also specific problems with completion rates for Foundation level which indicated that centres continued to use this inappropriately for students with particular educational needs (Pyke, 1996e). During this period the achievement levels for other vocational qualifications (not NVQs or GNVQs) also continued to grow (at a rate of 12 per cent), but there was evidence that overall, the education and training systems were still under-performing (Crequer, 1997).

⁹ That year the percentage of students at each level was 11 per cent Foundation, 47 per cent Intermediate and 42 per cent Advanced level.

¹⁰ Government Ministers were accused of excluding 50,000 students from the results (Nash, 1996b).

¹¹ Carey (1996) sought to explain the calculations for the completions and cited the hidden drop-out rate in AS and A levels, masked by the late registration of students taking these qualifications.

During 1995 and 1996 three major reviews of qualifications took place. In 1995 The Beaumont Review of the 100 most used N/SVQs commenced. Regarded by some as superficial (Stanton, 1997), it failed to establish why some sectors were not adopting the new qualifications. It showed that there was a bias towards selected vocational areas with forty three qualifications accounting for over 80 per cent of the NVQs awarded¹². This was an ominous sign for GNVQs where four of the vocational areas were found to account for the vast majority of the students and qualifications awarded. Beaumont reported that there was widespread support for NVQs¹³ but that they did not provide an adequate training route for the unemployed or adults¹⁴. Beaumont recommended separating the roles of NCVQ¹⁵, that the jargon and language in the specifications should be reviewed¹⁶, assessment standards and quality assurance roles be clarified¹⁷, and assessment systems made more robust to withstand pressure from outcomes based funding regimes. Even though later that year, Capey acknowledged that GNVQs were substantially different to NVQs these action points reflected the action required in GNVQ confirming the problems generated by the common design features.

The Capey GNVQ Assessment Review (1995) followed the Beaumont review. The remit was to review the changes being implemented in GNVQs in 1995, particularly those to assessment and grading. Whilst staff and students continued to be very positive about GNVQs the review established that there was a need for further simplification of the assessment and recording requirements. The final report exposed weaknesses that continued to affect the credibility of GNVQs (Edwards et al, 1997) and contained nineteen recommendations which addressed the manageability of the assessment regime, key skills, grading and external testing. Many of these were a reiteration of, or similar to, those made over a year earlier in the GNVQ Assessment Review Project (ED, 1994). GNVQs

¹² The majority of these were awarded in the service sector.

¹³ Some thought that this was an exaggeration as fewer than one in five employers responded to Beaumont's research (Smithers, 1997a).

¹⁴ This issue was probably related to the funding provision of TECs.

¹⁵ At this point NCVQ held both roles of setting standards and designing qualifications. Beaumont recommended that these should be separate functions.

¹⁶ Smithers (1997a) noted that difficulties with the language used in NVQs were actually conceptual problems and not simply a matter of jargon.

¹⁷ Beaumont acknowledged some aspects of the external verifier's role were incompatible.

required a different approach to assessment but Capey failed to address the problems related to the lack of depth of knowledge required by the specifications (Smithers, 1997a). Ofsted confirmed Capey's findings on assessment even though GNVQs were thought to be maturing (Gardiner, 1996).

The Dearing Review of 16 - 19 qualifications began in 1995 and proved to be the most influential of the three reviews. Dearing's remit was to advise on how to strengthen, consolidate and improve the framework of 16 - 19 qualifications (Stanton, 1997). In 1996 Dearing's Review confirmed the need for a single qualifications framework comprising a three track system¹⁸. This strengthened the position of the increasingly narrow three A level route as the preferred track for the more able. Making the three tracks even more distinctive was seen as a backward step (Dunford, 1996a; Pyke, 1996a¹⁹; Young, 1998)²⁰. Other recommendations were criticised as inappropriate, ambiguous or lacking in detail with many problems not addressed (Austin, 1996). The government was adamant that A levels had to be preserved and this influenced Dearing to the extent that a single qualification for all was never an option as one of his recommendations. This resulted in Dearing recommending a compromise by opting for the over-arching Advanced Diploma as opposed to any radical reform of the whole qualifications system. The Secondary Heads Association (SHA) and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) were critical of the recommendation for an over-arching Diploma (Pyke, 1996b). The weakness of this was that it was based on voluntarism (Spours and Young, 1996)²¹ and was very reliant on the interdependence of the qualifications (Young, 1998)²². Some of the other recommendations in the review were seen as not being sufficiently developed or practical (Spours and Young, 1997). The review was accused of being too employer focused, of proposing changes that were little more than incremental and neglecting the context for any changes

¹⁸ During 1999, 2000 and 2001 the Qualifications Framework was to be reissued several times with routes remaining roughly the same but with the addition of Entry Level qualifications, the clarification of the grade equivalencies and the position of key skills.

¹⁹ The Chief Executive of NEAB (Kathleen Tattersall) not only expressed concern at the maintenance of three separate tracks but also that vocational qualifications would be introduced at fourteen years of age for the disaffected (Pyke, 1996a).

²⁰ The three tracks would exist at four levels, effectively removing HE from the conflict over the creation and parity of level five.

²¹ A mandatory Advanced Diploma could have provided the flexibility required within the framework and addressed the weakness of both A levels and GNVQs.

²² Spours and Young (1996) noted that there was a clear tension in the need to provide qualifications for different students and the need to achieve parity between these qualifications.

(Young, 1998). Others (Smithers, 1996; Pyke, 1996c) criticised Dearing's reluctance to reform A levels although this was seen to be a result of the constraints of the original brief which resulted in this range of conservative recommendations²³ (Dunford, 1996a; Hart, 1996). Dearing noted that many unsuitable students took A levels and that these students should be directed into GNVQs or the Modern Apprenticeship route. This compounded the use of GNVQs as a negative choice and did little to resolve issues of parity of esteem or help to establish the credibility of GNVQs. Nor could the latter be acquired by the change of name proposed by Dearing (GNVQs at Advanced level should be known as Applied A levels to indicate parity)²⁴. Dearing noted that the assessment of GNVQs needed to be more rigorous but simpler. Other than this he appeared to pay little attention to creating actual parity between qualifications. Other proposals included some reforms to A and AS levels (AS levels should become the first half of an A level and renamed), the retention of single subject A levels, a fast-track to HE for high achievers²⁵ and applied and vocational qualifications were to be made available at 14 years. Whilst some of the recommendations bore some similarity to the proposals of the Labour Party (Pyke, 1996d) later research was to question the appropriateness of Dearing's drive for parity (Whitehead, 1997).

The Dearing Review supported the government White Paper 'Learning to Compete: Education and Training for 14 - 19 year olds' (DfEE, 1996b). This promoted the use of Part One GNVQ as an option choice for 14 year olds. This was seen by some as a re-introduction of streaming whereby Part One would become the preserve of the disaffected, the lower socio-economic classes and disadvantaged groups (Tomlinson, 1997). This would only serve to reinforce the division of the three tracks as candidates appeared unlikely to change tracks once they had chosen to pursue a particular type of qualification. There was strong support for some of Dearing's recommendations including the merger of SCAA and NCVQ (to form QCA), the creation of a single qualifications framework and the merging of the academic and vocational bodies resulting in three unitary awarding authorities.

²³ Dearing delivered a report that the government would take notice of as opposed to one that contained recommendations he knew would be rejected (Hart, 1996).

²⁴ There was still a conflict between trying to keep GNVQs close to NVQs and yet create a public parity of esteem (Edwards et al, 1997).

²⁵ It was questionable whether such an exam was needed (Pyke, 1997b).

As a result of the Dearing Review (1996) and the consultation Paper 'Qualifying for Success'²⁶ (DfEE, 1997) the government announced further reforms to all post-16 qualifications. The reforms included changes to AS and A levels, and upgraded, more flexible GNVQs²⁷, new key skills qualifications, extension and end tests for A levels. The reforms were to increase numbers taking and attaining broader and more demanding qualifications post-16 and meet the needs of employers and HE. In 1998 it was announced that QCA would be proceeding with the development of new post-16 qualifications (QCA, 1998). In addition, Part One would become available nationally, ending the longest pilot within GNVQs. However, the schedule for development and implementation (Appendix 9.1) already looked ambitious. The changes showed that QCA were still striving to establish the Qualifications Framework, establish key skills for all post-16 participants and create the breadth and flexibility not yet achieved.

At this stage alternative qualifications were intermittently still under consideration (Burstall, 1996; Pyke, 1997a). There was even the possibility that thousands of home grown college qualifications would be accredited in the drive to create greater flexibility (Nash, 1997). This would have led to further problems within the Qualifications Framework. There was no indication as to how these would be valued in the qualifications market or how they would be positioned in the Qualifications Framework (Macrae, Maguire and Ball, 1997).

The New Model GNVQ

From 1996 onwards there were a series of revisions and developments in GNVQs including the piloting of a number of new models (Table 9.2).

²⁶ This contained many of the recommendations made by Dearing, for example creating an over-arching certificate.

²⁷ To be known as the Advanced Certificate in Vocational Education at level three.

Table 9.2

Ongoing changes to GNVQs 1996 - 2000

Date	Changes and developments
1996	Part One phase 2 pilot (Art & Design, Information Technology and Leisure & Tourism added) Capey pilot commences Pilots continue for existing awards (Land & Environment and Performing Arts) Revision of existing awards continues (Hospitality & Catering)
1997	Part One phase 3 pilot (Engineering added) New Model Pilot commences (full award and Part One) Key Skills pilots (three types of pilot offered by QCA, individual awarding bodies and exam boards) Merger of NCVQ and SCAA finalised to form QCA Revisions to existing awards cease
1998	Part One phase 4 pilot ²⁸ (centres allowed to expand the number of programmes offered and more centres admitted to the pilot) Single award pilot (6 unit Advanced level award equivalent to one A level)
1999	Part One available nationally and at both pre and post-16 Part awards pilot (3 unit Advanced level award equivalent to one AS level) Proposed to remove specific qualifications from the suite of GNVQs (Advanced level Retail and Land & Environment)
2000	New Model qualifications available at Advanced, Intermediate and Foundation levels Advanced level renamed Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education New Advanced levels awards available (6 and 3 units)
2001	Vocational GCSEs announced (will replace Foundation and Intermediate levels and Part One)

The New Model GNVQ would introduce changes that were recommended by Capey and Dearing, and were designed to achieve two major objectives. Firstly, to ensure that all GNVQs were more manageable in terms of implementation in schools and colleges. Secondly, to ensure that the assessment of GNVQ was more rigorous. The changes were designed to reduce the assessment burden, strengthen internal and external assessment, clarify the course requirements for students (what should be learnt and what would be assessed) and to present the specifications in plain, comprehensible, jargon-free language and direct them at the students. These took GNVQ even further away from the NVQ model and closer towards an academic style qualification²⁹. In November 1996 a schedule for the 'roll out' of the new qualifications confirmed that there was little time for the real

²⁸ The Part One pilot was initially funded and managed by the DfEE who selected centres and had authority over the awarding bodies. 1998 was the last year of DfEE funding for Part One. From 1999 funding would only be available via the LEA Standards funds.

²⁹ This included the removal of approval requirements, both initial and ongoing.

development and testing of the New Model as yet again, unrealistic targets for piloting and implementation of the new style specifications were set (NCVQ, 1996. Appendix 9.2). It should be acknowledged that at this stage, the merger of NCVQ with SCAA was actually taking place and that awarding bodies were working towards merging with exam boards to form unitary awarding authorities that offered both academic, pre-vocational and vocational qualifications.

The Capey Pilot (1996 - 97) was relatively low key. It involved a small number of centres and little feedback was published. In 1997 a further pilot was commissioned to run from September 1997 to 2000³⁰. The pilot involved approximately 200 centres (although a small number withdrew) that would deliver new style units and a new assessment model. During the pilot there were revisions to the units and to the assessment methodology. Drafts of the new units were initially placed on the QCA website for consultation by the end of 1998 (Foundation and Intermediate levels) and 1999 (Advanced level). Other pilots that took place at this stage, including key skills³¹ and Part One³².

The New Model GNVQs would be entirely based on units. Appendix 9.3 shows a summary of the unit structure. There was to be only one form of assessment for each unit and grading was to be contextualised in each unit. Additionally, there would be new ways of calculating the final grade using a points based system. Foundation and Intermediate grading would remain as merit and distinction but Advanced level grading would become comparable to A levels with the introduction of A to E grades. It would no longer be necessary to pass every aspect of the programme in order to gain a full award as the overall grade was dependent on the total points score (known as a compensatory model).

Internal assessment would be subject to standards moderation (which would be designed by individual awarding bodies), would still be based on compiling a portfolio, and would be worth approximately

³⁰ The pilot comprised four vocational areas (Business, Art & Design, Health & Social Care and Information Technology) at all three levels. There were also focus groups formed in other vocational areas, website consultations and feedback sought from centres, HE and employers.

³¹ There were pilots run by QCA, awarding bodies and exam boards.

³² These led to some confusion as some centres were unsure as to which pilot they were participating in. During 1999 some Part One centres would have been operating three models as the existing award and two pilots overlapped.

two thirds of the qualification. External assessments (approximately one third) would be externally set and marked by the awarding bodies. However, the exact nature of the external assessments would be allowed to vary according to the awarding body, vocational area, level and unit content. External assessments could include tests, assignments or projects. It seemed strange that, in trying to regain control over what was seen as a system lacking in rigour, that so many individual variations would be deliberately built into the system. Only time will tell if these result in real or perceived differences in standards between the three awarding bodies, vocational areas and centres. This may create an even bigger question mark over parity of esteem.

Key skills would remain an integral part of GNVQ although they were no longer to be a mandatory requirement for a full award and would be separately certificated. This meant that the size of the qualification was reduced³³. To aid the creation of flexibility in 16 - 19 qualifications there would also be smaller awards at Advanced level. These would equate to one A level (the 'Single award', comprising six units) and one AS level (the 'Part award', comprising three units³⁴). Part One would comprise three units only but would still be subject to two forms of testing for all three units. The differences between the Legacy Model³⁵ and the New Model GNVQ are summarised in Appendix 9.4.

Key Skills

The new key skills qualifications were also a result of the Dearing review. The QCA pilot units were developed from the existing GNVQ key skill units. This pilot lasted two years³⁶ and the evaluation was conducted by FEFC, Ofsted and the Training Standards Council (TSC)³⁷. The involvement of the latter reflected the government's drive for all trainees to acquire key skills. The remit of the evaluation ensured that they looked at all three pathways, academic, pre-vocational and vocational.

³³ Advanced level would consist of twelve units, with Intermediate and Foundation six units.

³⁴ Part awards would only be available in a restricted number of vocational areas.

³⁵ The Legacy Model is the title now commonly used to describe the original model of GNVQ offered from 1992 to 2002.

³⁶ The pilot comprised 47 schools, 23 FE Colleges and 13 training providers.

³⁷ This expanded the group of those with vested interests in the qualifications.

They examined the effectiveness of the planning, implementation and manageability of the qualifications, the effectiveness of staff development, support, guidance and resources, and the ability of the qualifications to motivate participants. They also examined the internal assessment for rigour and consistency, the revised forms of external assessment (including standards moderation) and the overall manageability of the assessment process. Many aspects of this remit and evaluation reflected the ongoing problems experienced with the Legacy Model of GNVQ. The feedback from the pilot (Ofsted, FEFC, TSC, 2000) was not entirely positive and acknowledged that there were many difficulties that needed to be resolved before the qualification was launched. APL was still problematic³⁸, exemplar materials were still required and assessment procedures needed developing. Application of Number was again the most problematic key skill. Overall, completion rates were low. This led to a one year postponement of the national launch of the qualifications whilst further development work was completed.

It is interesting to note that the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) produced a support pack for the introduction of the New Model. This emphasised the management, recruitment, induction and progression of students, teaching, learning, assignment writing, assessment and key skills (FEDA³⁹, 2000). Some of the good practice noted in these publications reiterated good practice from the Legacy Model but were not requirements of the code of practice for the New Model.

In 2001 it was announced that vocational GCSEs would be developed to be introduced in 2002. It is proposed that these will replace Foundation, Intermediate and Part One GNVQs and be based on the latter. They will be available pre and post-16. However, Sixth Form and FE Colleges are already expressing concerns regarding the resit culture that these qualifications may recreate.

³⁸ It wasn't until 1997 that NCVQ conducted a national survey across GNVQ centres to determine the extent to which diagnostic and initial assessment were being used to measure the key skills development of prospective students. The survey showed that there were very few appropriate tools/instruments that were commercially produced. A number of projects emerged from this work including the publication of good practice criteria and the development of further links with HE who were to produce resource packs.

³⁹ Now known as the Learning and Skills Development Agency.

Conclusions

The introduction of the New Model was again hurried with units and rules of combination⁴⁰ not being confirmed until late in the academic year prior to the introduction. In this respect, QCA and the awarding bodies appeared to have learnt little from the introduction of the Legacy Model. The findings of this research indicate that these delays will have a negative influence on the programmes offered in centres.

It is questionable whether the New Model will enable institutions to achieve liberation (Ecclestone, 2000). The New Model GNVQ shares even more characteristics with academic qualifications and this will lead to a further imbalance in the Qualifications Framework. This research concluded that the Legacy Model GNVQ had bridged the GCSE/A level divide but the New Model is so similar to academic qualifications that this role may be negated. This research found that centres did not combine GNVQs with other qualifications (academic or vocational). The New Model should enable centres to combine GNVQs with academic qualifications achieving greater flexibility⁴¹. The design changes have removed all similarities between GNVQs and NVQs, effectively severing the relationship between these two qualifications⁴².

The changes in the New Model contain much needed alterations to the basic design of GNVQs. The New Model acknowledges the problems of the Legacy Model by seeking to reduce the minute detail, complexity and bureaucracy. This includes the removal of a number of aspects that this research found to be causing centres problems, were difficult to implement (key skills and grading) and were not used effectively (APL and rolling admission). Some of these changes reduce the need for staff to introduce and integrate multiple assessment requirements, simplifying assessment/assignment design. The removal of APL is a positive move as this research found that many centres regarded this aspect as unworkable.

⁴⁰ The Single and Part awards created the need for QCA to determine how these qualifications could be combined.

⁴¹ However, this is highly dependent on timetabling constraints.

⁴² There are no recognised subsets of units in NVQs that can be seen to be equivalent to those in GNVQs and academic qualifications and therefore there is even less encouragement to combine GNVQs and NVQs.

Delivery and assessment in the New Model have, to some extent, been simplified by the unit design⁴³ and the removal of some of the mandatory requirements. However, the 'What You Need to Learn' section does add a new form of complexity and it is debatable whether this will be integrated into the delivery with such tight assessment schedules. The removal of the key skills and grading criteria as separate mandatory requirements will drastically reduce the assessment burden for both students and staff and bring greater parity in terms of the size of the qualification compared to academic qualifications. This is a positive development enabling centres and awarding bodies to overcome the problems identified in this research regarding the introduction, implementation and integration of these aspects.

However, there are potentially three major problems with the new assessment regime. Firstly, the compensatory model⁴⁴ may reduce the 'tooing and froing' of work and resit preparation time but this, coupled with the increased use of external assessment contributing to grading, may place pressure on staff to teach to the test to an even greater extent than in the Legacy Model. Secondly, this research showed that centres benefited from the external verification system, but in the New Model there is little or no opportunity for regular, direct feedback to individual centres under the moderation system. Thirdly, there is a risk that the Intermediate students, the group that appear to have benefited most from GNVQs (FEDA, 1997), may be disenfranchised by the new design and assessment regime⁴⁵.

It is unclear how centres will use the key skills work developed in the Legacy Model as they now implement separate key skill qualifications across whole cohorts at post-16. The smaller awards at Advanced level and the style of the units will discourage further development of integration in delivery and assessment. This research showed that there was mixed implementation of integration in both key skills and vocational units and that a number of centres found integration difficult to develop. Experienced centres may continue to develop this approach but even greater care will be

⁴³ This includes the reduction of the overall size of the units.

⁴⁴ The requirement to 'pass' every unit has been removed but the number of test opportunities has been reduced to two.

⁴⁵ The New Model may not attract the Intermediate group (the vocationally undecided and those who had failed GCSEs) to the same extent and centres may be forced back into the resit culture.

needed if centres offer vocational areas to groups of students that include those studying for twelve, six and three unit awards⁴⁶.

A number of distinctive features of the Legacy Model GNVQs have disappeared. The removal of a separate code of practice and the Quality Framework (including the removal of approval criteria and processes) will simplify implementation, development and management of the programmes. This includes the removal of the formal quality assurance roles. However, as internal assessment is still required and moderation will replace internal and external verification there will only be a small reduction in the number of roles required to implement the programmes. These roles will undoubtedly be confined to subject areas, departments or faculties removing some of the more complex cross-centre roles experienced in the Legacy Model. However, individual workloads may increase as the use of the six and three unit awards grows.

Whilst this research showed that the approval criteria were applied and met to varying degrees, it is of concern that approval criteria and systems have been entirely removed. The research showed the importance of a number of factors (for example, previous experience and lead-in time) that will not be monitored under the New Model. This and the removal of the external verification system (found to be a positive influence on centre development), may reduce the awarding bodies ability to influence development, or to monitor franchise and consortium arrangements, poor completion rates or the quality of programmes⁴⁷. Whilst awarding bodies have provided ongoing support during the first year of implementation of the New Model it is likely that this will be reduced next year. In addition there is no requirement for student induction at all. Whilst this could be beneficial for those centres identified in this research that found many aspects of the induction hard to introduce, it removes the requirement that was seen to have distinct benefits for students. Pressure for completion and attainment are such that a number of centres may cease to offer any induction. Only time will tell if this affects the standards achieved in these centres.

⁴⁶ This delivery strategy may be used to make group sizes viable.

⁴⁷ Centres with poorly developed Legacy Model GNVQs are unlikely to be encouraged to improve under the New Model other than by the pressure from league tables.

The New Model could encourage the harmonisation of entry requirements across qualifications at each level. With increasing pressure from the new assessment regime it is likely that centres will apply entry criteria more carefully to ensure completion rates⁴⁸. The continued use of low, no or unspecified entry criteria at Intermediate level (found in this research) will place centres in serious danger of having poor completion and achievement rates in the New Model.

This research found that there was a definite division in the popularity of GNVQs. It is unlikely that the New Model will have any influence on the status of Major and Minor League GNVQs. Whilst this research found that flexible admission ('roll-on') was never really developed, it was apparent that centres did try to accommodate individual needs in the exit phase. The capacity of centres to offer additional time for students to complete may be lost potentially reducing the number of students achieving qualifications. The New Model will still allow students access to a variety of progression routes but modularisation at Advanced level (with twelve, six and three unit awards) may lead to even more emphasis being placed on *GNVQ as a route to HE*. Modularization may enable more students to achieve more qualifications at a higher level but it is unlikely to raise the profile or importance of the NTETs at the institutional level.

This research showed that external links in GNVQs were limited and dependent on centre type. The New Model could result in a further decline in these links as centres come under increasing pressure to teach to the test. The researcher anticipates that patterns of provision will emerge across different types of centres such as the influence of the existing culture of institutions. Programmes will be implemented and integrated into existing systems and will not greatly influence institutional development. As the Legacy Model had been operating for eight years it is likely that some of the differences in provision (related to the length of approval experience) had declined. However, this research indicates that the variations allowed in the New Model may magnify existing differences between centres and have the potential to allow new differences to develop.

⁴⁸ This research found that the target groups were identified in negative terms according to the entry criteria. However, changes to entry criteria may lead to problems in identifying the target group for the New Model.

Bibliography

- Ainley, P. (1990) Vocational Education and Training. London: Cassell.
- Ainley, P. (1995) Twin tracks en route to an elitist society. Times Educational Supplement, 16 June 1995.
- Arkin, A. (1994a) Get them young, keep them keen. Times Educational Supplement, 28 October 1994.
- Arkin, A. (1994b) Standards safeguard is top of export list. Times Educational Supplement, 4 November 1994.
- Arkin, A. (1995) No longer content to make do. Times Educational Supplement, 21 April 1995.
- Audit Commission and Ofsted (1993) Unfinished business: Full-time Educational Courses for 16-19 year olds. London: HMSO.
- Austin, M. (1996) Sir Ron's recipe for reform comes without beef. Times Educational Supplement, 12 April 1996.
- Bailey, N. (1995) GNVQs in Business in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.
- Baker, K. (1989) Further Education: A New Strategy. London: DES.
- Ball, S. J. (1990) Politics and Policy Making in Education. London: Routledge.
- Beaumont, G. (1996) Review of 100 NVQs and SVQs. A Report Submitted to the Department for Education and Employment. Sheffield: DfEE.
- Benn, C. and Fairley, J (eds.) (1986) Challenging the MSC on Jobs, Education and Training. London: Pluto Press.
- Bill, L. (1991) Certification practices in the European Community. London: City & Guilds London Institute.
- Blackburne, L. (1995) Experts row over pass rate levels. Times Educational Supplement, 25 August 1995.
- Boswell, T. (1994) in FEFC General National Vocational Qualifications in the Further Education Sector in England. Coventry: Further Education Funding Council Inspectorate.
- Boswell, T. (1995) in Merrick, N. Competition 'stifling' new qualification. Times Educational Supplement, 21 April 1995.
- Bowyer, P. (1995) GNVQs - Taking Stock. Competence and Assessment No. 30. DfEE October 1995.
- Brandes, D. and Ginnis, P. (1986) A Guide to Student Centred Learning. Oxford: Blackwell
- Brandes, D. and Ginnis, P. (1990) The Student-centred School: Ideas for Practical Visionaries. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brennan, S. and Silver, H. (1988) A Liberal Vocationalism. London: Methuen.

- Broadfoot, P. (1996) Education, Assessment and Society. A Sociological Analysis. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Brown, A. (1994) Delivery of General National Vocational Qualifications by Part-time Mode: Results of a national consultation exercise. Surrey: University of Surrey.
- Bryman, A. (1989) Research Methods and Organisation Studies. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Burke, J. (1995) Introduction and Overview in Burke, J. (ed.) Outcomes, learning and the curriculum. London: Falmer Press.
- Burstall, E. (1996) Still talking of a Bac in Wales. Times Educational Supplement. 23 February 1996.
- Business and Technology Education Council (1993) If you've got it in you BTEC will bring it out. London: BTEC.
- Business and Technology Education Council (1994) A guide to BTEC qualifications. London: BTEC.
- Campanelli, P., Channell, J., McAulay, L., Renouf, A. and Thomas, R. (1994) Training: An exploration of the word and the concept with an analysis of the implications for survey design. Research Series No. 30. London: Department of Employment.
- Capey, J. (1995) GNVQ Assessment Review. Final report of the review group. London: NCVQ.
- CAPITB Trust, (1994) Final Report on the Acceptability of the GNVQ Manufacturing Intermediate Level to the Clothing Industry. Project 26. Sheffield: The Employment Department.
- Carey, N. (1996) Statistics tell a story of success. Times Educational Supplement. 13 September 1996.
- Chitty, C. (ed.) (1991) Post-16 Education Studies in Access and Achievement. London: Kogan Page and the Institute of Education, London University.
- Chorlton, W. (1994) GNVQ: Is it for you? London: Hobsons for The Careers Research and Advisory Service.
- City & Guilds, (1993) GNVQ in Manufacturing. London: City & Guilds London Institute.
- City & Guilds, (1994a) GNVQs, A guide for students. London: City & Guilds London Institute.
- City & Guilds, (1994b) Increasing Quantity and Improving Quality. Broadsheet No. 131. London: City & Guilds London Institute.
- Confederation of British Industry (1989) Towards a Skills Revolution: Report of the training and education task force. London: CBI.
- Confederation of British Industry (1991) World Class Targets: A Joint Initiative to Achieve Britain's Skills Revolution. London: CBI.
- Constable, H. (1992) The Labour Party and the Classless Society 1991. Journal of Educational Policy. Vol. 7 (1) pp. 91-91.
- Converse, J. M. and Presser, S. (1986) Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardised Questionnaire. Newbury Park and London: Sage.

- Cotton, J. and Robbins, D. (1996) The Theory of GNVQ Planning and Assessment. London: Kogan Page.
- Crequer, N. (1994a) Students prefer things as they are. Times Educational Supplement, 14 October 1994.
- Crequer, N. (1994b) Where co-operation gives teenagers a better deal. Times Educational Supplement, 21 October 1994.
- Crequer, N. (1997) Train all workers until 19, says think-tank. Times Educational Supplement, 24 January 1997.
- Crockett, M. (1996) Vocationalism and vocational courses 14 - 16 in Halsall, R. and Crockett M. (eds.) Education and training 14 - 19: Chaos or coherence. London: David Fulton.
- Crombie White, R., Pring, R. and Brockington, B. (1995) 14 - 19 Education and Training: Implementing a Unified System of Learning. London: Royal Society of Arts.
- Crowne, S. (1997) Problems more newsworthy than progress. Times Educational Supplement, 27 June 1997.
- Dearing, R. (1993) The National Curriculum and its Assessment. Final report. London: The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Dearing, R. (1995) Wanted: a better 16 - 19 bridge. Times Educational Supplement, 28 April 1995.
- Dearing, R. (1996) Review of Qualifications for 16 - 19 Year Olds: Full Report. London: The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Department for Education (1992) Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools. Department for Education/Welsh Office. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education (1993a) General NVO, The New Vocational A levels, a brief Guide. London: DfE.
- Department for Education (1993b) General National Vocational Qualifications. The new vocational A levels, A brief guide. London: DfE.
- Department for Education (1994) The New Qualifications Framework. London: DfE.
- Department of Employment (1981) A New Training Initiative: A Programme for Action. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Employment (1996a) Action Plan to Boost Vocational Qualifications - Lord Henly. London: DfEE.
- Department for Education and Employment (1996b) Learning to compete: Education and training for 14 - 19 year olds. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Employment (1997) Qualifying for Success. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Employment (2000) Vocational Qualifications in the United Kingdom 1998/99. DfEE Statistical Bulletin. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Science (1985) Better Schools. London: HMSO.

- Department for Education and Science (1989) Selected National Education Systems II. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Science (1991) Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) England and Wales 1983 - 1990. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Science and the Employment Department (1985) Education and Training for Young People. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Science and the Employment Department (1986) Working Together - Education and Training. London: HMSO.
- Department for Education and Science, Employment Department and the Welsh Office (1991) Education and Training for the 21st Century. London: HMSO.
- Department of Trade and Industry (1994) Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win. London: HMSO.
- Dieckman, E. A. (1993) A check for researcher bias in an ethnographic report. Research in Education. No. 50, pp. 201-205.
- Dunford, J. (1996a) Troubled waters stay. Times Educational Supplement. 5 April 1996.
- Dunford, J. (1996b) Staff costs stymie GNVQs. Times Educational Supplement. 6 September 1996.
- Ecclestone, K. (2000) Analysis of the GNVQ assessment regime. Journal of Education Policy. Vol. 15 (5), September - October 2000 pp. 539-558.
- Edwards, T., Taylor Fitz-Gibbon, C., Hardman, F., Haywood, R. and Meagher, N. (1997) Separate but Equal ? A levels and GNVQs. London: Routledge.
- Employment Department (1991) Flexible Learning. A Framework for Education and Training in The Skills Decade. Sheffield: Employment Department.
- Employment Department (1992) Introducing GNVQs into Schools and Colleges. Sheffield: Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate.
- Employment Department (1993) A year in GNVQ 1992/93, The school perspective. Sheffield: Employment Department Group.
- Employment Department (1994) GNVQ Assessment Review Project. Report No. 23. Sheffield: Employment Department Learning Methods Branch.
- Evans, D. (1995) In search of a broader clientele. Times Educational Supplement. 17 February 1995.
- Evans, D. (1997) Science struggles as a sustainable symbol of survival. Times Educational Supplement. 11 April 1997.
- Finegold, D., Keep, E., Milliband, D., Raffe, D., Spours, K. and Young, M. (1990) A British 'Baccalaureat': ending the division between education and training. Institute for Public Policy Research Education and Training Paper No. 1. London: IPPR.
- Finegold, D. (1992) Education, Training and Economic Performance in Comparative Perspective in Phillips, D. (ed.) Lessons of Cross-national Comparison in Education. Wallingford: Triangle Books.

Further Education Funding Council (1994) General National Vocational Qualifications in the Further Education Sector in England. National Survey Report. Coventry: Further Education Funding Council Inspectorate.

Further Education Unit (1979) A Basis for Choice. London: FEU.

Further Education Unit (1985) CPVE in Action. London: FEU.

Further Education Unit (1986) Aspects of CPVE. London: FEU.

Further Education Unit (1993) A report of the FEU's Evaluation of General National Vocational Qualifications. London: FEU.

Further Education Unit (FEU) (1994a) Developing GNVQ Science - FEU evaluation. FEU Newsletter November 1994. London: FEU.

Further Education Unit (1994b) GNVQs 1993-94 A National Survey Report. Ashford: Further Education Unit, Institute of Education University of London and The Nuffield Foundation.

Further Education Unit (1994c) What are the implications for education and training. 'Competitiveness' White Paper. FEU Newsletter November 1994. London: FEU.

Further Education Development Agency, Institute of Education, University of London and The Nuffield Foundation (1997) GNVQs 1993-97 Final Report of a National Survey. London: FEDA.

Further Education Development Agency (2000) The revised GNVQ. London: FEDA.

Gardiner, J. (1996) Unhappy verdict on vocational award. Times Educational Supplement, 14 June 1996.

Gibbs, G. (1992) Improving the Quality of Student Learning: based on the Improving Student Learning Project. Bristol: Technical and Education Services.

Gibson, J. (1996) Vocational still seen as the loser's option. Times Educational Supplement, 8 March 1996.

Ginnis, P. (1992) Learner-managed learning. Ticknall: Education Now.

Gleeson, D. (1989) The Paradox of Training, Making Progress Out of Crisis. Oxford: Alden Press and The Open University.

Glover, L. (1995) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.

Green, A. (1991) The Reform of Post-16 Education and Training and the Lessons from Europe. Working Paper No. 11. London: London University Institute of Education Post-16 Centre.

Green, A. and Ainley, P. (1995) Progression and the Targets in Post-16 Education and Training. Centre Report No. 11. London: London University Institute of Education Post-16 Centre.

Halsall, R. (1996) Core skills - the continuing debate in Halsall, R. and Crockett M. (eds.) Education and training 14 - 19: Chaos or coherence. London: David Fulton.

Harrop, J. (1992) Response to the Consultation on General National Vocational Qualifications. NCVQ Report No. 15. London: NCVQ

- Harrop, J. (1995) The Introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications: The first year - September 1992 to June 1993 in Burke, J. (ed.) Outcomes, learning and the curriculum. London: Falmer Press.
- Hart, D. (1996) A Clearing in the Jungle. Times Educational Supplement, 26 April 1996.
- Heikkinen, A. (1992) Lessons from the European periphery. London: London University Institute of Education.
- Heron, E. (1995) A new line on production. Times Educational Supplement, 28 April 1995.
- Hewlett, R. (1995) GNVQs in Leisure and Tourism in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.
- Hillier, J. (1992) Enthusiastic support for GNVQs. Broadsheet No. 125, October 1992. London: City & Guilds London Institute.
- Hillier, J (1995) in Merrick, N. Competition 'stifling new qualification. Times Educational Supplement, 21 April 1995.
- HMI (1991) Aspects of Vocational Education and Training in the Federal Republic of Germany. Cardiff: Welsh Office Education Department.
- HMI (1993) Aspects of Vocational Education in France. London: HMSO.
- Hockey, J. (1993) Research Methods - researching peers and familiar settings. Research Papers in Education Policy and Practice. Vol. 8 (2), pp. 199-225.
- Hodkinson, P. and Mattinson, K. (1994) A Bridge too Far ? - The Problems Facing GNVQ. Manchester: The Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Hodkinson, P. and Sparkes, A. (1995) Markets and Vouchers. Journal of Education Policy, Vol. 10 (2), pp. 189-207.
- Hugill, B. (1994) Colleges in scandal of exam passes. Times Educational Supplement, 27 March 1994.
- Hyland, T. (1993) Vocational Reconstruction and Dewey's Instrumentalism. Oxford Review of Education. Vol. 19 (1), pp. 89-100.
- Hyland, T. (1994a) Silk purses and Sows' Ears: NVQs, GNVQs and Experiential Learning. Cambridge Journal of Education. Vol. 24 (2), pp. 233-243.
- Hyland, T. (1994b) Tilting at Windmills: the problems of challenging the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Educational Studies. Vol. 20 (2), pp. 251-265.
- Hyland, T. (1994c) Criticisms of competence-based education and training. Notes on a presentation at the University of Warwick: Midlands Universities Training session on GNVQs and HE. Warwick: The University of Warwick.
- Hyland, T. (1994d) GNVQs and the Post-16 Curriculum. London: Trentham Books.
- Hyland, T. and Weller, P. (1994) Implementing GNVQs in Post-16 Education. Warwick: The University of Warwick Continuing Education Research Centre.

Industry in Education (1996) Towards Employability: Addressing the gap between young people's qualities and employers' recruitment needs. London: Industry in Education.

Jessup, G. (1990) Common Learning Outcomes: Core Skills in A/AS levels and NVOs. Report No. 6. London: NCVQ.

Jessup, G. (1991) Outcomes: NVOs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training. London: Falmer Press.

Jessup, G. (1994) in Chorlton, W. GNVQ: Is it for you ? London: Hobsons for the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC).

Jessup, G. (1995) NVOs and GNVQs: The Next Phase. Broadsheet No. 133, May 1995. London: City & Guilds London Institute.

Johnson, J. (1995) Progression - HE and Employment in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.

Klenowski, V. (1995) Student Self-evaluation Processes in Student-centred Teaching and Learning Contexts of Australia and England. Assessment in Education, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 145-163.

Knasel, E. and Meed, J. (1994) Becoming Competent: Effective Learning for Occupational Competence. A report for the Employment Department Learning Methods Branch by Learners First. Report No. 27. Sheffield: Employment Department Group.

Kongsley, S. (1993) The Nature of Educational Organisations and the Process of Change. Educational Change and Development, Vol. 1 (14), pp. 41-48.

Lau Walker, T. (1995) Further Education and GNVQ in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.

Lawson, T. (1992) Core Skills 16 - 19 in Whiteside, T., Sutton, A. and Everton, T (eds.) 16 - 19 Changes in Education and Training. London: David Fulton.

Lepkowska, D. (1995) The small but significant minority. Times Educational Supplement, 17 February 1995.

Lowham, T. and Bowner, A. (1995) Structure and Chaos: Introducing GNVQs as a Vehicle for Institutional Change in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.

Macfarlane, E. (1993) Education 16-19 in Transition. London: Routledge.

Macfarlane, E. (1996) Sir Ron and the great However. Times Educational Supplement, 12 April 1996.

Mackinnon, D., Newbould, D., Zeldin, D. and Hales, M. (1997) Education in Western Europe. Facts and Figures. London: Hodder and Stoughton and The Open University.

Mackinnon, D., Statham, J. and Hales, M. (1996) Education in the UK. Facts and Figures, Revised edition. Oxon: Hodder and Stoughton and The Open University.

Marshall, J. (1993) Portfolio Development, Towards National Standards. A Guide for Candidates/Advisers and Assessors. Manchester: Development Processes (Publications) Ltd.

MacLeod, D. (1994) Students are caught in the fight between institutions to secure funding. The Guardian. 18 October 1994.

Macrae, S., Maguire, M. and Ball, S. J. (1997) Competition, 'Choice' and Hierarchy in a Post-16 Market in Tomlinson, S. (ed.) Education 14 - 19 Critical Perspectives. London: Athlone

Marvell, A. (1995) What it takes to get an offer. Times Educational Supplement. 17 February 1995.

Maxwell, E. (1994a) Post-16 curriculum planners warned. Times Educational Supplement. 25 November 1994.

Maxwell, E. (1994b) Courses 'low profile' concerns students. Times Educational Supplement. 25 November 1994.

Maxwell, E. (1995) A joint path for staying on. Times Educational Supplement. 14 July 1995.

Mayne, P. (1992) Teaching and Learning Styles in Whiteside, T., Sutton, A. and Everton, T (eds.) 16 - 19 Changes in Education and Training. London: David Fulton.

McGavin, H. (1996) Even low GNVQ passes open doors to university courses. Times Educational Supplement. 13 September 1996.

Meikie, J. (1994) New vocational exams 'must be improved now'. The Guardian. 18 October 1994.

Merrick, N. (1995) Competition 'stifling' new qualification. Times Educational Supplement. 21 April 1995.

Merrick, N. (1997) Confusion as rivals battle for students. Times Educational Supplement. 14 February 1997.

Millington, J. (1993) Engineering Training for Young People. Education and Training, Vol. 35 (1), pp. 11-17.

Nash, I. (1993) Prepared to share modules. Times Educational Supplement. April 1993.

Nash, I. (1994a) Consensus is that revolution was rushed. Times Educational Supplement. 4 November 1994.

Nash, I. (1994b) GNVQ falls victim to its own success. Times Educational Supplement. 11 March 1994.

Nash, I. (1994c) Uneasy Ministers press ahead. Times Educational Supplement. 28 October 1994.

Nash, I. (1994d) 'Ill-advised' students on course to fail. Times Educational Supplement. 21 October 1994.

Nash, I. (1994e) Vocational revolution in trouble. Times Educational Supplement. 28 October 1994.

Nash, I. (1994f) Fear that GNVQs breed 'sheep and goats'. Times Educational Supplement. 11 November 1994.

Nash, I. (1994g) GNVQs not fulfilling objectives. Times Educational Supplement. 9 December 1994.

Nash, I. (1995a) Hatchet urged on GNVQ red tape. Times Educational Supplement. 3 February 1995.

Nash, I. (1995b) Heads seek peace in post-16 recruiting. Times Educational Supplement, 19 May 1995.

Nash, I. (1996a) Pupils shun GNVQ degree path. Times Educational Supplement, 10 May 1996.

Nash, I. (1996b) Exam success story disputed. Times Educational Supplement, 30 August 1996.

Nash, I. (1996c) Vocational exams open doors. Times Educational Supplement, 23 August 1996.

Nash, I. (1997) New qualifications chief promises more flexibility. Times Educational Supplement, 31 January 1997.

National Commission on Education (1993) Learning to Succeed: A report of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the National Commission on Education. London: Heinemann.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1993a) GNVQ Information note. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1993b) NCVQ information note General National Vocational Qualifications. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1993c) Assessing Core Skills in GNVQs. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1993d) Conventions for Describing General National Vocational Qualifications. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1993e) Introducing GNVQs. Approval briefing note. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994a) General NVO, A guide for employers. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994b) Grading Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994c) Grading Advanced GNVQs. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994d) Advanced Health and Social Care: Guidance for mandatory units. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994e) Evaluation of Foundation GNVQ 1993 - 94. Student response. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994f) Guidance note Manufacturing GNVQ. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994g) Grading Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994h) Grading Advanced GNVQs. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1994i) GNVQ Scholarship Scheme. London: NCVQ.

National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1995a) GNVQ Briefing. London: NCVQ.

- National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1995b) GNVQ Update. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1995c) NVQ criteria and guidance. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1995d) GNVQs at Higher Levels: A Consultation Paper. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1996) Timetable of GNVQ revisions, implementation and circulation of information. Information note November 1996. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications (1997) A Support Handbook for Part One GNVQ. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications, BTEC, City & Guilds and RSAEB (1995) GNVQ Quality Framework. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications, BTEC, City & Guilds and RSAEB (1996) GNVQ Centre Approval, Common criteria for the initial approval of GNVQ centres and courses. London: NCVQ.
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Further Education Development Agency and the Joint Council of National Vocational Awarding Bodies (1996) Revised GNVQ Model. London: NCVQ.
- National Curriculum Council (1990) Core Skills 16 - 19: A response to the Secretary of State/National Curriculum Council. York: National Curriculum Council.
- National Curriculum Council (1991) Curriculum Guidance 6: Careers Education and Guidance. York: National Curriculum Council.
- Nicholls, A. (1995) Reform costs not just cash. Times Educational Supplement, 2 June 1995.
- Oates, T. (1992) Developing and Piloting the NCVQ Core Skill Units. London: NCVQ.
- Office for Standards in Education (1993) GNVQ in schools: The Introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications. London: HMSO.
- Office for Standards in Education (1994) GNVQs in schools 1993/94: Quality and Standards of General National Vocational Qualifications. London: HMSO.
- Office for Standards in Education (1997) Part One General National Vocational Qualifications pilot: The first two years 1995/97. London: HMSO.
- Office for Standards in Education, Further Education Funding Council and the Training Standards Council (2000) Pilot of New Key Skills Qualification 1997 - 99. London: HMSO.
- Ollin, R. and Smith, E (1996) Planning, Delivering and Assessing GNVQs. London: Kogan Page.
- Patten, J. (1993a) Patten Welcomes New Era for Further Education. London: DfE press release 31 March 1993.
- Patten, J. (1993b) Patten speeds up new vocational qualifications. London: DfE press release 5 April 1993.

- Pattison, G. (1995) GNVQs in Manufacturing in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you? London: Cassell.
- Powney, J. and Watts, M. (1987) Interviewing in Educational Research. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Prais, S. J. (1981) Vocational qualifications of the labour force in Britain and Germany, National Institute Economic Review, 98, pp. 47 - 59.
- Pring, R. (1997) Aims, Values and the Curriculum in Tomlinson, S. (ed.) Education 14 - 19 Critical Perspectives. London: Athlone.
- Pyke, N. (1996a) Exam Chief fears that Dearing will divide. Times Educational Supplement, 20 September 1996.
- Pyke, N. (1996b) Sir Ron's diploma too elitist, say heads. Times Educational Supplement, 5 April 1996.
- Pyke, N. (1996c) Dearing's elite exam suffers setback. Times Educational Supplement, 18 April 1996.
- Pyke, N. (1996d) Labour backs a Dearing 16 - 19 solution. Times Educational Supplement, 22 March 1996.
- Pyke, N. (1996e) Less than one third reach level in time. Times Educational Supplement, 30 August 1996.
- Pyke, N. and Ward, L. (1996) Changes fail to redeem an ailing qualification. Times Educational Supplement, 8 November 1996.
- Pyke, N. (1997a) Exam changes put on hold. Times Educational Supplement, 13 June 1997.
- Pyke, N. (1997b) Dearing elite exam suffers setback. Times Educational Supplement, 18 April 1997.
- Qualifications Curriculum Authority (1998) QCA proceeds with developing post-16 qualifications, 3 April 1998. London: QCA.
- Rae, A. (1993) Evaluation of GNVQ Pilot Programmes: A suggested model. Education and Training, 35(3), pp. 23-28.
- Raggatt, P., Edwards, R. and Small, N. (eds.) (1996) The Learning Society: challenges and trends. London: Routledge in association with the Open University.
- Robinson, P. (1996) Rhetoric and Reality of Britain's New Vocational Qualifications. London: London School of Economics Centre for Economic Performance.
- Robson, C. (1993) Real World Research. A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rogers, R. (1988) A is for acronym. School Governor, No. 2. March 1988.
- Rosenthal, D. (1996) Sixth forms urged to promote parity. Times Educational Supplement, 7 June 1996.
- RSA Examinations Board. (1991) Notes for guidance. Coventry: RSAEB.

- RSA Examinations Board. (1993) General National Vocational Qualifications. Briefing notes. 3 July 1993. Coventry: RSAEB.
- RSA Examinations Board. (1994) External Verifier briefing note. Coventry: RSAEB.
- RSA Examinations Board. (1995) Notes for Guidance - Vocational Qualifications. Coventry: RSAEB.
- Russell, B. (1997a) Vocational A level has failed. Times Educational Supplement. 6 June 1997.
- Russell, B. (1997b) Principals stand for 16 - 19 parity. Times Educational Supplement. 2 May 1997.
- Russell, B. and Munro, N (1997c) Reforms urged for vocational qualifications. Times Educational Supplement. 25 April 1997.
- School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1994) The Review of The National Curriculum. A Report on the 1994 Consultation. London: SCAA.
- School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1995) 1994 Examination Results A and AS. London: SCAA.
- Shepherd, G. (1993) Patten Welcomes New Era for Further Education. London: DfE press release 5 April 1993.
- Sherman, R. R. (1991) Vocational Education and Democracy in Corson, D. (ed.) Education for Work. Bristol: Multilingual Matters and The Open University.
- Sims, D. (1994) GNVQs for the Built Environment - Interim Evaluation Report. London: National Foundation for Educational Research and the Construction Industry Training Board.
- Smithers, A (1993) All our futures: Britain's education revolution. Dispatches. London: Channel 4 Television.
- Smithers, A. (1994) Need to rock the GNVQ boat. Times Higher Educational Supplement. 15 April 1994.
- Smithers, A. (1995) Able to dribble but not score. Times Educational Supplement. 10 February 1995.
- Smithers, A. (1996) Another fine mess for Sir Ron to fix. Times Educational Supplement. 1 November 1996.
- Smithers, A. (1997a) A Critique of NVQs and GNVQs in Tomlinson, S. (ed.) Education 14 - 19 Critical Perspectives. London: Athlone.
- Smithers, A. (1997b) GNVQs lack coherence and don't lead anywhere. Times Educational Supplement. 13 June 1997.
- Solomon, J. (1995) And finally, here is the good news. Times Educational Supplement. 14 April 1995.
- Spencer, D. (1994) GNVQs need immediate improvement. Times Educational Supplement. 4 November 1994.
- Spencer, D. (1995) £7 million boost to give GNVQs credibility. Times Educational Supplement. 30 June 1995.

Spours, K. (1993) Analysis: the reform of qualifications within a divided system in Richardson, W., Woodhouse, J. and Finegold, D. (eds.) The reform of post-16 education and training in England and Wales. Harlow: Longman.

Spours, K. (1995a) Post-Compulsory Education and Training: Statistical Trends. Learning for the Future, Working Paper 7. London and Warwick: Institute of Education Post-16 Education Centre University of London and the Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick.

Spours, K. (1995b) The Strengths and Weaknesses of GNVQs: principles of design. Learning for the Future Working Paper No. 3. London and Warwick: Institute of Education Post-16 Education Centre University of London and the Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick.

Spours, K. and Young, M. (1996) Aiming higher than Dearing ? Times Educational Supplement, 19 April 1996.

Spours, K. and Young, M. (1997) Time to unravel Dearing. Times Educational Supplement, 13 June 1997.

Stanton, G. (1992) Funding and Planning for Quality in Pack, P. (ed.) Creative Chaos ? London: Underhill.

Stanton, G. (1997) Patterns in Development in Tomlinson, S. (ed.) Education 14 - 19 Critical Perspectives. London: Athlone.

Stock, N. and Conway, G. (1992) From Pre-Vocational to GNVQ in Whiteside, T., Sutton, A. and Everton, T. (eds.) 16 - 19 Changes in Education and Training. London: David Fulton.

Stoney, S. M. and Lines, A. (1987) YTS: The Impact on Further Education. London: National Foundation for Educational Research - Nelson.

Sutcliffe, J. and Blackburne, L. (1995) Drop-out inquiry demanded. Times Educational Supplement, 22 September 1995.

Sutton, A. (1994) NTETs, GNVQs and flexible learning. The Curriculum Journal, Vol. 5 (3), pp. 333-349.

Taylor, S. and Spencer, L. (1994) Individual commitment to lifetime learning: Individuals attitudes: Report on the qualitative phase. Research Series No. 31. Sheffield: Employment Department Policy Studies Institute.

The Guardian (1994) Parlez-vous GNVQ ? 14 June 1994.

The Times Educational Supplement (1993) Putting and end to post-16 waste, 30 April 1993.

The Times Educational Supplement (1995) Cash crisis stays unresolved, 19 May 1995.

Tomlinson, S. et al (1995) Teachers' Views of 14 - 19 Education. London: The National Union of Teachers', Goldsmiths College and the Institute of Education.

Tomlinson, S. (1997) Education 14 - 19: Divided or divisive ? in Tomlinson, S. (ed.) Education 14 - 19 Critical Perspectives. London: Athlone.

- Townsend, C. (1994) A bogus thing of scraps and smears. Times Higher Education Supplement, 28 October 1994.
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (1994) Higher Education Progression from Advanced GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism. Summary. 17 September 1994. London: UCAS.
- Utley, A. (1993) Schools alerted to NCVQ Quality. Times Higher Education Supplement, 12 October 1993.
- Utley, A (1994a) Tests spoilt for choice. Times Higher Education Supplement, 7 February 1994.
- Utley, A (1994b) Boswell backing for Brand A. Times Higher Education Supplement, 13 May 1994.
- Ward, L. (1996a) Colleges oppose A-level lobby. Times Educational Supplement, 19 April 1996.
- Ward, L. (1996b) Bid to end variable vocational standards. Times Educational Supplement, 2 August 1996.
- Ward, L. (1996c) Employers prefer academic study. Times Educational Supplement, 8 March 1996.
- Watson, J. (1991) The French Baccalaureat Professionel, Working Paper 9. London and Warwick: Post-16 Education Centre, London University Institute of Education and the Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick.
- Webb, A. and Shaw, S. (1994) GNVQ Combination Project Final Report for the Employment Department. Sheffield: Employment Department.
- Welsh Joint Education Committee (1993) Learning from the GNVQ Pilot Experience in Wales. Cardiff: WJEC.
- Weston, P. and Stradling, R. (1993) Vers l'Europe des competences ? in Tomlinson, H. (ed.) Education 14 - 19: Continuity and Diversity in the Curriculum London: Longman in association with BEMAS.
- Whitehead, M. (1997) Research queries Dearing's parity drive. Times Educational Supplement, 4 July 1997.
- Whiteside, T. (1992) The 'Alliance' and the Shaping of the Agenda in Whiteside, T., Sutton, A. and Everton, T (eds.) 16 - 19 Changes in Education and Training. London: David Fulton.
- Whiteside, T. (1994) Tutoring and Guidance post-16: the students' view. The Curriculum Journal, Vol. 5 (3), pp.381-391.
- Willis, D. (1993) Learning and Assessment: exposing the inconsistencies of theory and practice. Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 19 (3), pp. 383-402.
- Wilmott, J. (1983) The Post-16 CAT framework and modular developments post 14 in Discussing Credit. FEU Occasional Paper. London: FEU.
- Wolf, A. (1995) Awards that pay lip service to flexibility. Times Educational Supplement, 3 February 1995.
- Woodhead, C. (1994) Vocational Courses: Why the head must rule the heart. The Sunday Times, 30 October 1994.

Wren, P. (1995) An introduction to GNVQs in Glover, L. (ed.) GNVQ into Practice: How was it for you ? London: Cassell.

Young, M. (1995) Modularisation and the Outcomes Approach in Burke, J. (ed.) Outcomes, learning and the curriculum, London: Falmer Press.

Young, M., Hodgson, A., Morris, D., Leggett, J., Melliss, N. and Wolf, A. (1995) GNVQs and Unifying the Post-16 Curriculum. Unified 16 plus Curriculum Series No. 11. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Young, S. (1996) Old-style A-levels favoured. Times Educational Supplement, 29 November 1996.

Young, M. F. D (1998) The Curriculum of the Future. London: Falmer Press.