

University College Birmingham

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 133785

Name of lead inspector: Richard Beaumont HMI

Last day of inspection: 10 February 2012

Type of provider: Higher education institution

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Information about the provider

1. University College Birmingham (UCB) is a specialist Higher Education Institution (HEI) offering vocational education, training and development to mainly the hospitality and catering, tourism, sport and leisure, hair and beauty, and early years and care sectors. UCB is based in the centre of Birmingham and delivers training to further education (FE) students from foundation to advanced level. Approximately 40% of all UCB students are enrolled onto FE programmes.
2. Following the previous Ofsted inspection in 2004, UCB has changed its name from Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, gained university college status and been awarded Beacon status. UCB is funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for its FE provision.
3. Birmingham is classified as an area with levels of deprivation which are significantly higher than the national average. In 2009/10, 62% of Birmingham's population classified themselves as white. At the time of the inspection, 55% of students were white. Qualification levels for Birmingham residents are lower than the national average.
4. UCB's mission is 'To promote and provide the opportunity for participation in the learning process by those with the ambition and commitment to succeed and to maintain a learning community that meets the diverse needs of our students, the economy and society at large.
5. This scope of the inspection focused on most of the FE provision offered. The area not in scope was teacher assistant learning support.
6. UCB provides training on behalf of the following provider:
 - Bournville College
7. The following organisation provides training on behalf of UCB:
 - Barford School

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: Further education (16 to18)	179 part-time learners 1,212 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	342 full-time learners 843 part-time learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1
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Capacity to improve	Grade 1
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	1
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	1

Subject Areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	1
Hospitality and catering	1
Leisure, travel and tourism	2

Overall effectiveness

8. UCB's FE provision is highly successful. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Almost all students that remain on-programme are successful, regardless of their background, diversity or starting point. Teaching in practical sessions is extremely effective and thoroughly focused on students gaining the necessary skills to meet the challenges of their chosen vocation. This is effectively complemented by good theory teaching. Learning resources are commensurate with high industry standards. Links with a wide range of partners are excellent at meeting the needs of students and employers who are particularly proud to be associated with the college.
9. FE students at UCB benefit from exceptional care, guidance, and academic and personal support. Staff are absolutely focused on enabling students to achieve their full potential in a very safe and harmonious learning environment. Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff at all levels collectively and resolutely work to deliver outstanding results and to be an integral part of the industries they serve, whether locally, nationally and beyond. Quality

improvement is characterised by a 'just do it' approach and supported well by excellent financial resources.

Main findings

- Overall, success rates are well above the national average. Pass rates are very high and retention rates are at least satisfactory and improving. Success rates for adults, foundation 16-18 year old students and apprentices are significantly above national average and, for intermediate 16-18 year old students, success rates are in line with the national average.
- The development of students' personal, social and vocational skills is exceptional. Students work to high industry standards and employers actively source UCB students to fill vacancies. Overall, a significant number of students with low entry qualifications make excellent progress, and progression onto further training and employment is very high. UCB students are very successful in national and international competitions.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. The quality of most students' learning experiences is inspirational and characterised by effective planning. Teachers build up trust well with their students so that students are extremely well-motivated and eager to learn. Teachers are exceptionally good at sharing their professional expertise, raising expectations, setting ambitious targets and ensuring that students gain confidence, and develop outstanding employability skills.
- UCB's specialist vocational provision is outstanding in meeting the needs of students and employers and the local community. It provides an impressive and broad range of specialist courses from foundation to degree level to meet the needs of all students. Excellent enrichment activities further enhance students' skills. Students benefit from a vast array of excellent work placement opportunities. Employer support to develop provision is particularly strong.
- Employers' and partner involvement is exceptionally strong and leads to demonstrable benefits to the students' learning experience. Their skills and knowledge are further enhanced by superb employer-led master classes, technical and product demonstrations, wide-ranging visits and trips, and particularly successful participation in high profile local and national competitions.
- Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. UCB offers exceptional support to enable students of all abilities to benefit from its provision. Initial advice and guidance are outstanding and multi-faceted with the result that students make well informed decisions. Many students exceed their expectations.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The college delivers its mission for FE provision admirably. Managers have a clear vision which is enthusiastically supported by staff, students and employers and an embedded culture of continuous improvement and high expectations. FE students benefit from outstanding resources, expert tutors and excellent support, which raises their aspirations and leads to a high proportion progressing to higher education.

- Areas for improvement are promptly identified and addressed by course teams who take responsibility for driving continual improvement. There is wide involvement in self-assessment and quality improvement. The college listens and responds particularly well to the views of students and employers. Self-assessment judgements are broadly accurate but reports are descriptive rather than evaluative. They take too long to produce and not all institutional areas for improvement are captured in the relevant development plan.
- A robust equality scheme is in place along with appropriate monitoring arrangements. The promotion of equality and diversity is a strategic priority and the college attracts a high proportion of FE students from disadvantaged areas. Male, female, students with a declared disability and those with no declared disability, and white and ethnic minority students achieve equally well. However, intermediate students from disadvantaged areas do not make as good progress as those at foundation and advanced level.
- Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Students have a very clear understanding of personal safety and they demonstrate good standards of health and safety. Clear strategies and policies are in place and their implementation is well resourced. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out on all staff.

What does UCB need to do to improve further?

- Promote better success rates for intermediate 16-18 year old students by targeting particularly those students from disadvantaged areas so that they compare favourably with the success rates of other young people.
- Produce self-assessment reports that are evaluative, evidence based and completed promptly at the end of the academic year to which they refer.
- Ensure all key areas for improvement are captured in the institutional level development plan, in particular those relating to teaching and learning and the differential achievement of groups of learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the overwhelming sense of pride at being part of UCB
- the whole college atmosphere and the very supportive staff
- the industry links that support learning and career choice
- the progress they make and the opportunities to study at degree level
- feeling valued, safe and part of the 'college team'
- the quality of work placements and the support to find employment
- the opportunity to exceed personal expectations and aspirations
- the learning support without which some students would struggle to succeed.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more employers coming to college to interview students for work
- reducing the gap between classes, which can sometimes be too long
- the planning of more interactive tasks in some theory sessions.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- students that are extremely well prepared for employment
- the high levels of support for students that helps them reach their potential
- UCB's willingness to invest in student success
- superb teaching staff with excellent industrial experience and a passion for the industry
- the commitment to continuous improvement
- the particularly good work placement communication
- the College's drive to introduce its own apprenticeship programme.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no significant areas for improvement.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

10. The college's capacity to make and sustain further improvements for its FE provision is outstanding. Further improvements in student outcomes have been secured since the last inspection and the few areas for improvement identified have been fully addressed. The quality of provision is outstanding, with expert tutors, excellent support for students and extensive links with a wide range of employers, resulting in exceptional benefits for students. Very effective actions to secure improvements are promptly taken by course teams with a passionate commitment to achieving excellence. Self-assessment judgements are broadly accurate; however, reports are too descriptive and a minority of overarching areas for improvement are not addressed in the development plan.
11. The college has a clear vision and distinctive strategic direction which is enthusiastically shared by staff, students and other stakeholders. Partnership arrangements are outstanding and lead to significant benefits for the local community and students. Governors effectively support and challenge managers. Financial management is excellent, enabling the college to provide exceptional levels of support for staff and students, and outstanding resources.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

12. Students develop very high standards of vocational and personal skills. They are very well motivated and effectively rise to meet the high industry standards set before them. Their standards of work are outstanding and employers confirm that most students are very well prepared for employment. Many students make significant progress in relation to their relatively low prior attainment. Progression into employment and higher levels of study is excellent. Many students take opportunities to study at degree level that previously they would not have considered a realistic option. Students very much enjoy learning at UCB and are proud to be associated with its success.
13. Overall success rates are high with some courses returning consistently very high success rates, for example, in hair, beauty and catering. Success rates for all adult, foundation 16-18 year old provision and the apprenticeship programme are significantly above the national average. Intermediate and advanced level 16-18 year old success rates are at and well above the national average respectively. Pass rates across all levels are consistently very high and comparable in-year retention rates have significantly improved on the previous year. Students in receipt of additional support achieve very well and there are no significant differences between the success rates for different groups of students analysed by gender and ethnicity. Attendance is at least satisfactory.

14. Students demonstrate good practical understanding of health and safety. They make well informed choices about their own health and well-being. Their participation in supporting improvements to college activities and making a positive contribution to the wider community is outstanding.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

15. Teaching is outstanding. The majority of FE teaching is delivered through practical sessions which are consistently of a very high standard. Most lessons are characterised by the combination of a strong focus on professional practice alongside highly effective teaching with stimulating and exciting well-planned activities that fill students with enthusiasm and energy. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods, have high expectations, and engender self-confidence by building trust and co-operation among their students.
16. Students make rapid progress in lessons and develop a range of exceptional practical skills that they effectively apply to their work settings and placements. However, as recognised by the college, in a minority of theory lessons, teachers either spend too long talking at students, do not fully check all students' understanding or do not always challenge sufficiently the more able students. Overall, assessment practice is robust, although, for a few students, feedback on ways to improve their work is not always sufficiently helpful.
17. Learning resources and practical accommodation are excellent. Information and learning technology (ILT), are of a very high quality and used particularly well by most teaching staff. The introduction of innovative and highly motivating digital technologies in hospitality studies extend students knowledge further and broadens their learning. Strategies to help students monitor and track their progress are particularly effective.
18. The specialist vocational provision is particularly effective at meeting the needs of all users. It is very impressive in hospitality and catering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. A broad range of courses, with well-planned progression routes are available from foundation to degree level. The curriculum is continually under review to ensure that it meets the changing needs of the industries it serves. Enrichment activities include additional vocationally relevant accredited learning, which provide students with increased employment and/or further study options.
19. Partnership working is exceptionally strong; for example, employer-led master classes and technical and product demonstrations allow students excellent opportunities to participate in wide-ranging visits and trips, and in high profile local and national competition work. All of these initiatives contribute to raising aspirations and improving students' knowledge. All students profit from good quality work-placement opportunities and many students work alongside highly skilled practitioners who value their association with UCB.

20. UCB offers exceptional guidance and support that enables students' of all abilities to benefit from its provision. Highly qualified, approachable and experienced staff effectively co-ordinate services to secure students' success. The careful tracking of student progress quickly highlights those at risk and arrangements to support those falling behind are swift and particularly well managed. Students are overwhelmingly positive about academic, pastoral and learning support they receive and the impact it has upon them in taking greater ownership of their future professional development needs.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

21. Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors have set a clear vision and distinctive strategic direction for the college, which is enthusiastically supported by staff, students' and partners. They successfully monitor progress against strategic priorities and achievement of the mission and vision, and all aspects of the latest vision have been realised. The college is fully committed to delivering an outstanding vocational curriculum and to maintaining the balance between FE and HE provision in order to support progression into employment and higher education. The Executive Team have successfully nurtured a culture of continuous improvement and high expectations resulting in very high staff morale. Curriculum management of the FE provision is highly effective.
22. Safeguarding arrangements are particularly effective. UCB's focus on ensuring the safety of students is a primary focus in every aspect of the College's operations. The very supportive ethos exhibited by staff towards students assures their well-being and outstanding outcomes. Students have a very clear understanding of personal safety and demonstrate good standards of health and safety. UCB's approach towards financially supporting safeguarding arrangements across the college is very impressive. For example, the college pays for taxis to take students home after working late at College and issues them with personal safety alarms. The College fully meets its legal safeguarding requirements. A designated senior manager effectively manages a dedicated safeguarding team that responds particularly quickly and very efficiently to forward plan and to respond to students' personal safety concerns and needs.
23. The overall promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. A robust equality scheme is in place along with effective monitoring arrangements. The college has very successfully managed to develop a strong and harmonious learning environment that celebrates its very diverse student body. The promotion of equality of diversity within the curriculum is good. Widening participation is a strategic priority, and a high proportion of FE students live within disadvantaged areas in the local community. The College's support for these students, along with those requiring additional support, is exceptional, and enables them to successfully achieve and make progress. Male, female, students with a declared disability and those with no declared disability. white and ethnic minority learners all achieve equally well. Overall outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds far exceed expectations with the

exception of students' achievement at intermediate level which is not as high as the achievement of students studying at foundation or advanced levels.

24. The views of users are actively sought and robustly acted upon in order to develop resources, improve the curriculum and meet the highest industry and training standards. Students are very well represented on college committees at all levels and there is regular engagement with employers through a wide range of employer activities. Both are very positive about the service they receive from the college, which is confirmation that communication, skills development and support are exceptional.
25. The college takes very effective action to promptly address areas for improvement and good practice is effectively shared. Quality assurance processes are robust and the self-assessment grades awarded by the college matched those of the inspection team. The grading of internal teaching and learning observations is broadly accurate, although the lesson commentaries do not always match the grade awarded. However, the self-assessment report is too descriptive and not all areas for improvement are addressed in the 'whole college' development plan. For example, improvements to success rates for 16-18 year old students.
26. Financial management is outstanding and risk management is effective in identifying and mitigating against key risks. Student recruitment remains buoyant and students achieve outstanding outcomes. The college uses its financial strength to continually invest in specialist resources that are very effectively used to promote learning. Staff are exceptionally skilled, highly qualified and benefit even further from a wide range of professional development opportunities. Sustainability and protection of the environment are appropriately prioritised.

Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 1

Context

27. UCB offers full-time childcare courses at intermediate and advanced level and a health and social care course at advanced level. At the time of the inspection, 303 students were enrolled. Most students are 16-18 year old females. Alongside their main programme, all students take courses in first aid, food hygiene and health and safety; childcare students study creative craft using nursery art.

Key findings

- Success rates at advanced level are well above the national average and, at intermediate level, they are in line with the national average. Pass rates are consistently very high for those students that stay on-programme. Students make very good progress relative to their prior attainment. For example, 73% of health and social care students achieved a grade of merit or above in 2010/11 and the number of students progressing onto higher education or relevant employment is very high.
- Students develop outstanding employability skills. For example, they are very confident, knowledgeable, able to communicate particularly well and are highly motivated. All students benefit from an effective work experience programme, including valuable experience in special schools for all childcare students. Students successfully complete a range of additional qualifications that enhances their employability.
- Students make a significant contribution to their local community through fundraising activities and a wide range of voluntary work, including supporting children with art and craft activities during Birmingham Arts Fest or working with vulnerable groups in the community. They develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyle choices such as sexual health and healthy eating through tutorial and cross college initiatives.
- Good teaching encourages students to develop a clear understanding of key terms and concepts through interesting activities that engage and stimulate them. Teachers often use their vocational experience very effectively to link theory to practice. However, in a few lessons teachers do not always fully stretch and challenge all students. Students receive prompt and constructive feedback on their work which helps them to improve further.
- Students have access to a good range of practical resources including well equipped specialist practical care, art and science rooms. However, occasionally classrooms are not sufficiently appropriate for planned group activities; for example, they are sometimes too small. Students find a wide range of resources available on-line and in the library very useful in supporting them to complete assignment work.

- Pre course information and attendance at Saturday FE Academy prepares students particularly well for the demands of the course. Highly approachable and responsive staff provide excellent pastoral care and academic support, which is highly appreciated by students. Comprehensive advice and guidance from early on in their studies enables students to move confidently into their next steps in education.
- The college has developed extremely strong partnerships with schools, nurseries and care establishments that are highly valued by employers. A dedicated work placement team monitors and works closely with academic staff in order to support students. This particularly effective coordinated approach has enabled many students to succeed despite considerable initial difficulties.
- Curriculum management is excellent. Staff and managers are passionate about, and succeed in, raising the aspirations of their students. Students are encouraged to set challenging personal targets, which are regularly reviewed and discussed. They are very clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to achieve their goals.
- Safeguarding has an extremely high priority and students demonstrate a very good awareness of safeguarding procedures for themselves and for the people in their care. A comprehensive system ensures that all students are safe in college and in their work placement. Staff respond swiftly and effectively to concerns from or about students who may be vulnerable. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.
- Self assessment accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Actions put in place by course teams, such as revised initial advice and guidance, have had a positive impact in improving retention rates. Careful attention to the needs of students and employers has led to changes in course provision and structure to more appropriately meet the needs of users.

What does UCB need to do to improve further?

- Develop further teachers' questioning skills through the sharing of good practice in order to ensure all students are stretched and challenged fully in lessons.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 1

Context

28. UCB offers full-time hairdressing, beauty therapy and spa courses at intermediate and advanced level and theatrical hair and makeup at advanced level. At the time of inspection, some 317 students were enrolled. Most students work towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) with some beauty therapy students enrolled onto a national diploma. Hairdressing programmes are available for both European and African type hair.

Key findings

- Success rates are consistently very high for all advanced level programmes and high for all other programmes. Innovative retention strategies are in place to improve success rates even further. However, attendance is generally satisfactory but falls well short of the high expectations of the hair and beauty sector.
- The development of students' skills is outstanding. For example, advanced level hairdressing students' work is exceptionally creative and highly technical, and beauty therapy students skilfully adapt their practice to meet the diverse needs of a broad range of clients. Employers are highly complimentary of the effective communication, client care and team work skills of students at all levels. Many accolades are achieved in extremely high profile competitions.
- Progression onto further study and into employment is high. Many advanced level students gain employment with prestigious and high profile employers. Progression to higher education is exemplary and enriches an industry that is recognised as having a low qualification base above advanced level.
- The quality of teaching and learning in practical sessions is generally outstanding across all disciplines. Teachers at advanced level expertly use their highly developed professional skills to challenge students to produce 'cutting edge' and highly proficient standards of work. At intermediate level, teaching is good, although, in a few cases, the range of teaching methods deployed is not always sufficient to maintain all students' interest.
- UCB offers an exceptionally broad and flexible range of programmes to meet the needs of hair and beauty students. They can progress from intermediate to higher education and regularly combine different disciplines at intermediate and advanced levels to widen their skill base, gain additional qualifications, and to increase their employment prospects.
- Partnership arrangements with employers are particularly strong. For example, high profile employers visit the college to interview and test students' practical skills for work placements and employment. Students on the theatrical hair and makeup programme work very closely with many local theatre groups. However, the co-ordination of work-place training and the benefits or areas for further improvement are not always sufficiently clear to improve student skills.

- The care, support and guidance students receive are exceptional. A significant proportion of students require additional learning and/or personal support and many have low self-esteem and confidence. The coordination of the support is particularly impressive and the high expectations and standards set by staff help to raise all students' aspirations. The impact is significant and achievements for all students are very high.
- Dynamic, ambitious and competitive leaders and managers are supported by a strong team of teachers who share the same, quality driven vision. That vision is completely focused on continuous improvement and surpassing the needs of users. Teaching staff are positive role models, who inspire and motivate the students. Staff are particularly well supported to achieve challenging targets.
- All staff within the department have received thorough training for safeguarding. Compliance to health and safety in hairdressing and beauty therapy is rigorous and well managed.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded well into the curriculum and students use and extend their knowledge effectively on clients that come from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, despite wide ranging staff development in equality and diversity, a few staff are not sufficiently confident to actively encourage and pursue naturally occurring opportunities to develop students understanding even further in learning sessions.
- The process for quality improvement is inclusive, productive, thorough and on-going. Teaching staff make valuable contributions to improvements through good, clear and evaluative review of their curriculum area. Regular team meetings are the foundation of continuous improvement. However, the self assessment report is lengthy, repetitive and descriptive, and does not sufficiently reflect some of the very successful findings found during the inspection.
- The resources at UCB are particularly impressive. The development of the very successful commercial suite, instigated by employers seeking future employees with work ready skills, is excellent. The salons, in which students work, mirror the long working day as experienced in a commercial setting. High quality products are used and are sustainable through the profits made from client visits. The management of the resources is very good.

What does UCB need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance to match that required by the hair and beauty sector.
- Coordinate the work placement training to link the work carried out at the college with that the employer provides.
- Develop further the range of teaching methods at intermediate level to actively motivate all students in line with those on advanced programmes.

Hospitality and catering

Grade 1

Context

29. UCB offers full and part-time courses in cookery and hospitality at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, both in the day and evenings at the College's main site. Of the current 675 students, around two thirds are aged 16 to 18 years old and most study full time.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are outstanding. Overall, success rates are high, with some course success rates significantly above the national average and some at around the national average. Pass rates are consistently very high. Students make very good progress relative to their prior attainment and progression into higher education or employment is excellent. Attention to safe working practices is good.
- Students are particularly well motivated and being a part of the hospitality and catering department raises their aspirations considerably. They develop an excellent range of practical skills and the standard of students' work is very high. UCB students consistently excel in a wide range of high profile catering competitions. Work placements effectively develop even further students' confidence, practical skills, and career opportunities.
- Teaching is excellent. Well planned sessions take full account of students' individual needs and teachers skilfully ensure that all students achieve of their best. Sessions are dynamic and inclusive, and students are fully engaged in learning. Teachers act as excellent role models. They are extremely knowledgeable and make very good use of their extensive industry experience to effectively develop students' passion for the industry. Assessment practice is good.
- Superb learning resources enhance the student experience greatly. Practical accommodation equally matches high industry standards. The quality and range of produce used adds significant value to the learning and extends beyond the qualification requirements. Excellent use is made of interactive learning technology (ILT) to develop independent learning.
- The range of provision is broad and students can progress from foundation to higher education. UCB is flexible in meeting the needs of its students and employers. Well matched work placements are effectively used to meet students' needs. However, placement reports completed by employers insufficiently reflect the wide range of tasks undertaken by students and the calibre of skills they demonstrate.
- Local and national partnership arrangements are used exceptionally well to benefit students. For example, students experience master-class demonstrations, visits to producers, related learning trips and work on a wide range of prestigious off-site functions. UCB actively uses its links with the

industry to promote opportunities for students to enter into quality employment.

- Support, advice and guidance for students are outstanding. Teaching and specialist staff offer a comprehensive and coordinated service. Students at risk of withdrawal are effectively nurtured and supported to achieve. Those in receipt of additional learning and/or recruited from recognised deprived areas, achieve particularly well. Students, whose first language is not English, benefit significantly from language support. Careers advice is excellent.
- Curriculum management is very strong. The management team is dynamic and ambitious. A clear management structure and 'open door' policy facilitates excellent communication between staff relating to student progress. Staff are proud, committed and passionate about their roles and value the culture of excellence which pervades the organisation. Staff benefit greatly from extensive professional development opportunities to maintain high levels of currency of their industrial practice and expertise.
- Students feel particularly safe. The department continuously raises awareness to students of the need for safe working practices and personal safety. Safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive and regularly reinforced during lessons, tutorials and during work placement. Overall, the promotion of equality and diversity is good, although inspectors noted that a few teachers failed to fully capitalise on naturally occurring opportunities in lessons.
- Arrangements to improve the quality of the provision are good. The college is very effective at gathering and using feedback from users to bring about effective and continuous quality improvement. The current self-assessment report is thorough and comprehensive, although it is overly descriptive and does not focus sufficiently well on key judgements. However, the college is fully aware of the need to improve the focus of its self-assessment report.

What does UCB need to do to improve further?

- Coordinate the work placement training more effectively to link the work carried out at the college with that the employer provides.
- Develop a self-assessment report and development plan that focuses clearly and succinctly on variations in success rates and areas for improvement.

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 2

Context

30. UCB offers a range of full-time programmes in travel and tourism and sports at mainly advanced level. Most students work towards a national diploma. At the time of the inspection, some 163 students were enrolled. Many students also complete subject-related additional qualifications such as airline cabin crew, coaching and Spanish.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates for the diploma in the travel and tourism advanced course have been consistently around the national average and success rates for the national diploma in sport, whilst steadily improving, remain well below the national average. However, for a small number of students guided onto respective certificate courses, results are outstanding. Overall, success rates for additional qualifications are high. Pass rates are outstanding and in-year retention has improved.
- Students develop particularly good employment skills. They are motivated and enjoy their programmes and consistently meet the challenging targets set. Many students achieve grades above those predicted and progression into employment and higher education is very high. Work placements and additional learning activities effectively enhance student confidence and vocational skills. Students demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the good or better sessions, lessons were well planned and effectively take account of all students' individual needs. Students make good progress in class, the pace is challenging, question and answer effectively managed and students' attention is maintained well. Teachers have a good rapport with students. In the few less successful sessions, teachers were not as well organised and tended to adopt a whole class teaching approach that missed opportunities to check on all students' understanding.
- Learning resources are good. Teachers are good role models. They are particularly well qualified and experienced and regularly use their own professional knowledge effectively to improve students' understanding. Accommodation is at least good, and particularly in sports. Teaching resources are well developed and effectively used.
- Overall, assessment practice is good. Most learners receive clear, constructive feedback on their performance, although the level of written feedback varies too much. The tracking of student progress is effectively maintained and those at risk of leaving the programme early are quickly and well supported. Work placement evidence is not sufficiently used as part of assessment planning.
- Programmes meet most students' needs well. Enrichment activities are extensive and there are good opportunities to gain additional qualifications. Effective partnerships with employers ensure that work placements are of a

high standard. Students and employers views are effectively used to improve provision.

- Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding and students are very appreciative of the lengths to which staff will go to support and guide them. Students in receipt of additional learning support achieve particularly well. Individual and group tutorials effectively enable students to achieve of their best and to take greater responsibility in the planning and development of their future careers, which they do well.
- Curriculum management is good and staff are passionate about improving student progress. Clear lines of communication assure an efficient whole department approach. Action plans to address under-performing courses are challenging, sound and effective: for example, a revised recruitment process. The monitoring of key in-year targets indicates that most will be met.
- Safeguarding arrangements are prioritised well. Effective procedures are implemented to ensure that students work in a safe learning environment. . Students have a good understanding of how they can stay safe and how they can help others to stay safe. For example, a sports student was able to clearly describe the correct procedures for looking for signs of child abuse at swimming classes. Promotion of equality and diversity is good.
- Quality improvement arrangements are good. Staff at all levels generally take immediate action to address areas for improvement. The self-assessment report was broadly accurate although it was too descriptive and the leadership and management grade was over-generous. Internal records of teaching and learning observations were generally accurate.

What does UCB need to do to improve further?

- Introduce improved systems that effectively retain all national diploma students on programme.
- Introduce an improved process for students, employers and teaching staff to effectively assess students' performance whilst on work placements and introduce challenging action plans for improvement.
- Ensure that all teaching staff use a broad range of teaching methods to actively involve and motivate all students.

Information about the inspection

31. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the College's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
32. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires which had been completed recently by students and employers. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
University College Birmingham

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	1,422	1,195	227
Part-time learners	886	175	711
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Capacity to improve	1		
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
How well do learners progress?	1		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1		
How safe do learners feel?	1		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1		
Quality of provision	1		
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	1		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1		
Leadership and management	1		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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