



Ofsted and Inspections

In 2007 the FE sector returned to having a single inspectorate for the first time since 1993. Government explained the change by talking of the advantages of a single common inspectorate covering every stage and mode of education, applying common standards and a consistent approach.

The move to bring all college inspections under Ofsted was controversial at the time. Many saw the move as a takeover. There was criticism of Ofsted's practice of subcontracting out the provision of associate inspectors, its lack of involvement with improvement activities and its failure to develop the potential of institutional self-assessment. It was also criticised as lacking independence from government – Ofsted is a non-ministerial department.

The impact of inspection judgements on providers was also heightened by Ofsted's introduction of a single numerical grade for overall effectiveness, which was more appropriate in a schools context than when applied to large and heterogeneous colleges.



However, since 2007, Ofsted's approach to inspection has evolved considerably. Instead of a regular inspection cycle it has brought in a 'risk based' approach, focussing inspections on those institutions that desk based analysis suggests could be a cause for concern. From 2012 it changed the grade descriptor 'satisfactory' to 'requires improvement' and introduced a strict timetable for re-inspection of institutions designated with a limited timetable for improvement. It now gives greater priority to the quality of teaching and learning and has dramatically reduced the notice period for inspections, even floating the idea of 'no notice' inspections.



Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education

Consultation document

This consultation seeks your views on our proposals for changes to the education inspection framework from September 2019. Your feedback will help us refine and improve our proposed approach. We will consider all responses carefully before finalising and publishing the framework in summer 2019. The closing date for this consultation is 5 April 2019.

Most recently Ofsted announced several important changes to the emphasis of its inspections. Following a three-month public consultation in 2019, which prompted more than 15,000 responses, Ofsted produced a new [FE and skills inspection handbook](#) which included a number of changes to the way inspections are now to be carried out in the sector.

The inspectorate also announced that it was considering stepping back from grading individual teachers or lessons in light of increasing criticism from teachers and mounting pressure from academic commentators who have queried its efficacy.

So, what does this mean in practice?

Inspectors will now be spending less time looking at performance data, and more time considering **how** providers are making sure their

learners are developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to allow them to successfully progress and achieve.

They will be looking at the substance of the education or training on offer: the curriculum, the design and the content of learning programmes. In essence: what learners are being taught, and how well they're being taught it. Managers and staff in providers will be asked to explain why and how they deliver the education and training programmes offered.

“Many understood how this would help reduce the incentives for schools and colleges to focus on just achieving better published outcomes at the expense of a rounded education,” Ofsted said.



It means that inspectors will make judgements on the following areas for FE providers: overall effectiveness, and four key judgements: quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management.



Clearer, shorter reports

Reports are now much shorter and clearer. As well as giving an independent view of how a college or training provider is performing and providing an overview of the courses offered, they give a real flavour of what it's like to go to a particular provider.

Ofsted wants to be a valuable source of information about providers of further education and skills training, and to give employers, learners and parents the information they need to make an informed decision about where to study or which provider to use. These new reports should make it easier to understand strengths of each provider, areas where they can improve, and what makes a provider unique.

Inspecting FE colleges - some research tasks

Why not learn a little more about the inspection process by completing these simple tasks?

1. Research your college's last Ofsted inspection using this link
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>

What overall grade was achieved?

List the main recommendations/next steps below:

2. Using this link: [About us - Ofsted - GOV.UK](#)

Find out three things that most people would not know about Ofsted

3. What is the main principle behind the Ofsted strategy 2017-22?