



3283

THIRD IMPACT STUDY

Human Sciences Research Council

Monitoring and Evaluation of
DANIDA Support to Education and Skills Development
(SESD) Programme

**ORBIT COLLEGE
NORTH WEST**

September 2004

1. ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

Since the second impact study was conducted in March 2004 the Orbit college profile has changed slightly in respect of staff and learner demographics and significantly in respect of the organisation of the college.

1.1 Demographic profile

Since March 2004 there has been an increase in FTE numbers at each of the four Orbit College learning sites (branches) The current numbers are:
Brits: 410,79; Odi: 1070,02; Rustenburg: 814,22; Temba: 1337,39.

Race

The CEO of Orbit college is a white woman, while the management and support staff at the Orbit corporate centre are racially representative. With a few exceptions, the staff at each of the four branches of the college tends to reflect historical racial divisions. The college management has begun to address this issue on a small scale. For example, at the time of the researcher's visit, two black staff from the Odi branch were expected to join the predominantly white staff at the Brits branch as soon as the formalities surrounding their redeployment were complete.

The learner profiles at Rustenburg and Brits continue to become more representative of the wider community, but little corresponding change is evident at Odi and Temba which are located in former Bophuthatswana 'homeland' areas.

Gender

The gender composition of the college staff has not changed significantly since March. At the corporate centre the CEO is female and the managers of the four key portfolios are male. The four branch heads are female.

Male staff still outnumber female staff at head of department level while the gender distribution among the educators is gradually becoming more equal. Despite a few exceptions, traditional gender divisions in the workplace are still reflected in the gender profile of educators. For example, the Odi branch which offers a number of practical engineering programmes, still has more male than female educators and the Brits branch which only offers business studies programmes, still has a predominantly female staff.

The overall gender profile of learners is roughly equal and enrolments in traditionally male and female work programmes are gradually changing. A recent example of this trend is the enrolment of the first women learners in the NATED plumbing programme.

The college has male and female learners on the SRC, although the chair is still a man.

Enrolments

The CEO reports a general increase in FTEs across all its branches. Even Odi, which experienced a dip in enrolments at the beginning of the year, was reported to have made up its numbers over the past six months. Brits is said to be running

at capacity and would need to increase both its number of educators and its available classroom space in order to expand.

The college continues to investigate strategies to support learners who would otherwise be excluded on financial grounds. This was cited as a priority by several stakeholders including the learner support portfolio manager and members of college council.

A few physically challenged learners as well as some who are hearing impaired, attend the college. On the whole, however, the branches, especially Odi, are unsuited to learners with serious mobility problems.

1.2 Organisational Organogram

Since the second evaluation visit in March 2004, Orbit college has undergone an extensive restructuring programme. This came about as a result of an internal review followed by a more extensive 'bosberaad' which included all of the FET colleges in the North West Province as well as senior management from the provincial Department of Education. As a result of the latter review, the CEOs visited a college in the Western Cape which is regarded as a front runner in respect of managing the merging of campuses. This, in turn, led to the colleges presenting a proposal for a new centralised structure to the DDG early in September.

In the new structure, the management of all key operations (such as finance, transformation, human resources, learner support, learnerships and linkages, and programmes) are located at the corporate centre and the campuses serve as delivery sites. The intention is for the four branches to focus on teaching and learning.

The researcher's visit to the college coincided with the former campus heads' first week in the corporate centre as portfolio managers. Each is now based in Rustenburg and responsible for managing a priority portfolio throughout the college.

It is obviously too early to assess the effectiveness of the new college structure. Nevertheless, despite the upheaval this additional and far-reaching re-organisation has brought about for numbers of staff, all respondents regarded the changes as sensible. The majority of discussants also expressed the view that the new structure has the potential for more effective and efficient operational management and felt that the college had finally "merged properly".

The CEO is no longer isolated and forced to drive all the strategic processes from her office. In addition, branch educators' past concerns that by involving campus managers in corporate responsibilities, the CEO took them away from their campus duties and this resulted in communication and operational blockages at branch level, have been addressed.

The revised Orbit organogram which has only to be signed by the MEC in order to be officially approved, follows:

Hi Azeem,

This is where the converted Powerpoint attachment needs to be decoded and the organogram inserted. The file accompanies this report file and is labelled as presentation to SACPO (South African Colleges Principals' Organisation).

Sorry I don't have the software to do the conversion.

Angela

2. CURRICULUM PROFILE

1. Art – Music

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
1.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	NIC/N2 Classical / Popular Music	1 year	Rustenburg
1.2 Other	UNISA, ALMSA Music: Practical & Theory Grade 1 - 7; Instruments: Guitar, Bass Guitar, Piano, Organ, Violoncello Vocal	1 year	Rustenburg

2. Business Studies

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
2.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	Introductory Business Studies NIC/N2 NSC/N3	6 months 1 year 1 year	Brits, Odi, Rustenburg and Temba
	Management Assistant N4-N6 Business Management N4-N6	18 months 18 months	Brits, Odi, Rustenburg and Temba
	Financial Management N4-N6	18 months	Temba
	Legal Secretary N4-N6	18 months	Odi & Temba
	Human Resource Management N4-N6	18 months	Odi, Rustenburg & Temba
	Marketing Management N4-N6	18 months	Odi, Rustenburg & Temba
2.3 Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	Operating a small business	36 hours over 12 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Debtors	10 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Creditors	10 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Wages	10 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Cash Books	10 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Overheads	4 to 8 hours	All 4 campuses

		over 4 to 8 weeks	
	Costing	4 to 8 hours over 4 to 8 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Auditing	4 to 8 hours over 4 to 8 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Company legal requirements	2 to 4 hours over 1 to 2 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Quotations	3 to 6 hours over 2 to 3 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Tendering	2 to 4 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Marketing	4 hours over 5 days	All 4 campuses
	Evaluation profits and losses	2 to 4 hours over 2 to 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Business skills	12 hours over 4 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Leadership skills	6 hours over 2 weeks	All 4 campuses
	Secretarial finishing course	16 hours over 2 days	Rustenburg
	Labour relations	16 hours over 2 days	Rustenburg
	Job interviews and applications	16 hours over 2 days	Rustenburg
	SeTswana	30 hours over 10 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	Pastel	68 hours over 7 weeks	Rustenburg, Temba and Brits
	MS Word	40 hours over 10 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	MS Excel	28 hours over 7 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	Access	28 hours over 7 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	Power Point	12 hours over 3 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	E-mail and Internet	12 hours over	Rustenburg and

		4 weeks	Brits
	Key board skills	6 hours over 3 weeks	Rustenburg and Brits
	Basic computer literacy	60 hours	Temba
	Advanced computer literacy	90 hours	Temba

3. Educare-Social Services

Orbit College no longer offers these programmes.

4. Engineering Studies

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
4.1 Engineering Classes: Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	Mining N1	3 months	Rustenburg
	National Certificate (NCOR)	3 months	Rustenburg
	Electrical Engineering (Heavy Current) N1 - N6	18 months	Odi, Rustenburg, Temba
	Electronics N2 and N3	6 months	Odi, Rustenburg
	Electronics Mechanician N1 – N3	9 months	Odi
	Air-conditioning & Refrigeration N1 - N6	18 months	Odi
	Automotive Trades (Diesel Mechanic) N1 - N6	18 months	Odi
	Automotive Mechanician N1 - N3	9 months	Odi
	Automotive Trades (Motor Mechanic) N1 - N6	18 months	Odi, Temba
	Automotive Electrician N1 - N6		Temba
	Metalwork Trades N1 - N6	18 months	Odi, Temba
	Fitter and Turner N1 - N6	18 months	Odi, Rustenburg, Temba
	Civil Engineering (Plumbing) N1 - N3		Odi, Temba
	Civil Engineering (Bricklaying and Plastering)	9 months	Odi, Temba

	<p>N1-N3</p> <p>Carpentry & Joinery N1 - N3</p> <p>Metalwork Trades (Boilermaker) N1 - N6</p> <p>Upholstery and Trimming N1 - N3</p>	<p>9 months</p> <p>9 months</p> <p>18 months</p> <p>9 months</p>	<p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Rustenburg</p> <p>Odi</p>
<p>4.2</p> <p>Engineering Workshops :</p> <p>Formal Practical Skills Training (DoL Apprenticeship Model)</p>	<p>Automotive Electrician Automotive Machinist Motor Body Repairer Spray Painter Motor Mechanic</p> <p>Electrician Electronics Mechanician Refrigeration & Air-Conditioning Fitter & Turner Boilermaker</p> <p>Bricklayer Carpenter Upholsterer Plumber</p>	<p>All 18 Months</p>	<p>Odi, Temba Odi Odi, Temba Odi, Temba Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Temba Odi Odi Odi Odi, Temba, Rustenburg</p> <p>Odi, Temba Odi, Temba Odi Odi, Temba</p>
<p>4.3</p> <p>Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)</p>	<p>Welding & Gas Welding</p> <p>Fence-making</p> <p>Plumbing</p> <p>Electrical</p> <p>Carpentry</p> <p>Carpentry (roof brick-making)</p> <p>Brick – laying</p> <p>Plastering & Tiling</p> <p>Motor Repairs</p>	<p>All 3 months</p>	<p>Odi, Rustenburg, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Rustenburg</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p> <p>Odi, Temba</p>

4.4 Subjects offered in schools	Upgrading of Mathematics (SG) Grade 12 and Science (SG) Grade 12	12 months	Rustenburg
4.5 Learnership and Skills Programmes	<p>Already Implemented:-</p> <p>Furniture Manufacturing NQF 2 (SHINTSHA Furniture Project)</p> <p>Plumbing NQF 3 (MESO ESDLE & Drain Surgeon Plumbing Academy Project)</p> <p>Soon to be implemented:-</p> <p>Information Technology Technical Support NQF 4 (Future Kids Project)</p> <p>Chemical Boilermaker NQF 3 (Febdev / NW ESDLE Project)</p> <p>Electrical Installation NQF 3 (Febdev / NW ESDLE Project)</p> <p>SMME Training Programme (W&R SETA SMME Project)</p>	<p>12 months</p> <p>12 months</p> <p>12 months</p> <p>12 months</p> <p>12 months</p> <p>12 months</p>	<p>Temba</p> <p>Odi</p> <p>All 4 campuses</p> <p>Odi, Temba, Rustenburg</p> <p>Odi, Temba, Rustenburg</p> <p>All 4 campuses</p>

5. General Studies

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
5.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	Clothing Production N2 - N6	3 years and 6 months	Odi
5.5 Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	<p>Sewing for clothing</p> <p>Patterns for clothing</p> <p>Design for clothing</p> <p>Layouts for clothing</p> <p>Basic Upholstery</p>	<p>72 hours over 6 weeks</p> <p>72 hours over 6 weeks</p> <p>72 hours over 6 weeks</p> <p>72 hours over 6 weeks</p> <p>50 hours over 10 days</p>	Odi

6. Utility Studies (catering and hospitality, cosmetology, haircare, interior decorating, tourism)

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
6.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	Cosmetology NIC/N2 - NSC/N3	12 months	Odi. Rustenburg
	Catering and Hospitality NIC/N2 - N4	8 months	Odi
6.3 SETA-accredited	Jewelry making Learnership – Accreditation application in process	12 months	Rustenburg
6.4 Learnerships	Hair Care (Accreditation process underway / busy with Unit Standards) NIC/N2 - NSC/N3	24 months	Odi and Rustenburg

7. Other short courses (not related to any of the above fields)

TITLE AND TARGET GROUP	DURATION	CAMPUS or DELIVERY SITE
Ballroom Dancing	10 weeks	Rustenburg
Art	10 weeks	
Interior Decorating	10 weeks	

8. Programmes and courses with common characteristics

8.1 Programmes or courses with an established reputation in the community or the geographical area served by the college.

1. N - courses, specifically Business Studies and courses with subjects Computer Practice & Accounting.
2. Skills programmes in Engineering Workshops.
3. Computer training

8.2 Programmes or courses which are new or relatively new and are working towards establishing a strong reputation.

1. ABET
2. Management Courses

8.3 Programmes or courses which attract the largest number of students.

1. NOR - N3 programmes (junior groups)
2. Computer literacy courses.
3. Engineering Workshops Practical Skills Training (Electrician and Motor Mechanic)

8.4 Programmes or courses which attract the smallest number of students.

1. N5 - N6 (Senior Groups)

8.5 Programmes or courses which offer the greatest potential for growth.

1. ABET
2. Computer literacy courses
3. Skills Programmes (engineering related)
4. Skills Programmes – (primary health care related, e.g. Home based caregivers)

8.6 Programmes or courses which generate the most income for the college.

1. Formal N - programmes
2. Computer literacy courses
3. N1 - N6 Full-time and Part-time
4. Engineering Workshops Practical Skills Training

8.7 Programmes or courses which generate the least income for the college and can be offered only through cross-subsidisation.

1. ABET

8.8 Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of employers or community groups.

1. ABET
2. Computer training courses/programmes
3. Electrical programmes
4. Jewelry Learnership
5. Fundamentals for Agriculture Learnership

8.9 Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of local government, provincial government or national government departments.

1. Music
2. Computer literacy
3. Fitting and Turning
4. Electrical
5. Furniture Making

8.10 Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of or with the support of local or international funders.

1. Jewelry Learnership
2. ABET
3. Computer literacy

8.11 Other

Orbit is in the process of entering into partnerships with various companies, SETAs and ESDLES to offer the unit standards, in particular, fundamentals, for various Learnership Programmes.

Tourism has been identified as a niche programme for the Brits campus and the college is in the process of implementing a programme based on Unit Standards.

RPL is an integral part of all Learning Programmes. A four - member team from Orbit College undertook an RPL Study Tour to the Netherlands. The college is investigating possible ways and means of implementing RPL processes across the college.

In preparation for the facilitation of learning activities that are OBE and NQF aligned, the college embarked on a HRD exercise whereby staff underwent training as Assessors; Moderators; Verifiers; Evidence Collector Guides and Curriculum Developers.

8.12 Programmes or courses which offer the greatest potential for growth.

1. ABET
2. Computer literacy courses

8.13 Programmes or courses which generate the most income for the college.

1. Formal N - programmes
2. Computer literacy courses
3. N1 - N6 Full-time and Part-time

8.14 *Programmes or courses which generate the least income for the college and can be offered only through cross-subsidisation.*

1. ABET

8.15 *Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of employers or community groups.*

1. ABET
2. Computer training courses/programmes
3. Electrical programmes
4. Jewellery learnership

8.16 *Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of local government, provincial government or national government departments.*

1. Music
2. Computer literacy

8.17 *Programmes or courses which were introduced at the request of or with the support of local or international funders.*

1. Jewellery learnership
2. ABET
3. Computer literacy

8.18 *Other*

Orbit is in the process of entering into a partnership with various mining companies to offer the fundamentals for mining learnerships.
Tourism has been identified as a Niche programme for the Brits campus and the college is in the process of implementing a programme based on Unit Standards.

3. CURRENT STATUS OF AREAS IN WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED UNDER THE SESD PROGRAMME

3.1 The merger process and knowledge sharing

Since the second impact study in March 2004, Orbit College has undertaken a complete overhaul of the merger process. In fact, since the middle of 2004, the college has adopted a new structure and can be said to have 're-merged'.

In essence, the new structure locates the strategic decision making, management and administration of all key operations at the corporate centre. The campuses are now 'delivery sites' and are expected to concentrate on teaching and learning. As a result, the CEO now leads a team of college portfolio managers rather than having to drive and attempt to duplicate all operations via four campus heads whose own accountability and responsibility were uneasily divided between the college and their campus' interests.

Although this significant restructuring process is very recent, it already has the support of all stakeholders. Far-reaching changes were just beginning to be implemented at the time of the third impact research visit, yet it was evident from interviewees and group discussions comments that the new merger made sense to them.

The only qualifications to various internal stakeholders' enthusiasm for the new structure were:

- The majority of middle management staff have been acting in positions above their posts for several years. The recent reorganisation of college management has resulted in several of these staff having to accept even more responsibility and to make personal sacrifices in respect of travel, work hours and professional autonomy without any assurances that the province will unfreeze posts and/or officially recognise their current levels of operation.
- Several staff at the different branches are apprehensive about what the actual implications of the new merger process are for them. Several educators fear a loss of professional control while certain administrators are unsure of what will be required of them.

Despite the college having gone through two years of effort in trying to make the original merger work, informants agree that this was not a waste. It prepared the ground by educating all staff in the requirements for a successful South African FET college. It also exposed the institutions' strengths and weaknesses while providing the leadership and management with invaluable experience in how to harness diversity and overcome resistance to change for the common good.

Some aspects of vertical and horizontal communication in the college had proved to be too slow and unreliable under the previous structure. This hindered genuine knowledge sharing and professional collaboration, especially between educators. Although it is hoped that the new structure will remove some of these communication bottlenecks, it should be noted that the lack of a college intranet, or even reliable e-mail access for all staff, is a real drawback.

3.1.1 Progress in strengthening the Orbit institutional identity

The research showed that even before the recent reorganisation the college identity had become stronger both internally and externally. College branding is more visible in the streets surrounding each branch and the staff members responsible for marketing at the branches have undertaken a few marketing exercises with the surrounding business and general communities. The situation at Odi has improved most, albeit from a low base, in this respect.

The college mission statement is prominently displayed in all public and teaching spaces and the college brand has become a taken-for-granted part of college life. Nobody questioned their institutional allegiance.

3.1.2 Progress in college operations

The SEDS Programme supported two major review processes which resulted in the restructuring described above:

- The first was an internal 'bosberaad' which entailed the review of the college's strategic plans.
During this process it became evident that while the majority of staff had accepted the merged Orbit identity, different campuses were interpreting messages and operational procedures differently. In addition, it was clear that capacity and contextual differences were having a negative impact on important operations such as financial management and administration.
- The second process was a North West provincial FET 'bosberaad' at which the various working commissions concluded that the North West colleges had not managed to merge their operations adequately. At the plenary session, the provincial Deputy Director General who is familiar with the FET terrain, intervened to encourage the three college CEOs to visit the Western Cape to investigate a college which is considered to be a leading example of a successful merger. This, in turn, led to the planning and implementation of the restructuring process which is currently in progress.

The new structure has divided college operations into four portfolios each with a former campus head as manager. These are:

1. Finances and Administration,
2. Transformation, Innovation and Infrastructure which includes the SEDS supported Linkages and Programmes Unit and the Marketing Coordinator,
3. Human Resources and Learner Support which includes a Learner Support Coordinator and a Human Resources Coordinator, and
4. Programmes.

Besides providing an external facilitator to help the college to revise its strategic plans, for the past six months the SEDS Programme has continued to assist Orbit by providing an appropriately qualified legal consultant to help with the ongoing development of Human Resource policies and procedures which accord with the Further Education and Training Act (98 of 1998). This consultant has also been working with the FET Directorate on the development of its HR policies.

The consultant has worked closely with and mentored the Orbit Human Resources coordinator, assisted with the training at each branch and is nearing the end of his contract to complete a comprehensive range of human resource manuals and templates for the college. Besides the general HR policy, Orbit now has written policies and procedures in all aspects of Provisioning, Labour Relations, Conditions of Service and Retrenchments. At the time of the research visit, there was still work to be done on human resource development and general issues such as HIV/AIDS, smoking, and communication. According to the HR coordinator and the consultant, there is a need for further support to the college to address performance management, discipline, employment equity and to run refresher training on the full gamut of policies because staff turnover has left certain capacity gaps.

The SEDS supported two-person Linkages and Programmes Unit began its work in June and has made considerable progress since then. Its achievements are discussed further under 3.3 below.

The SEDS supported Best Practices' Forum has been established and a plan for the North West Province Forum has been drawn up. The launch of the forum had been postponed from July and was due to take place shortly after the researcher's visit.

3.1.3 Vertical communication

Vertical communication continues to be hindered by the lack of an FET Director in the DoE. Although the province has appointed a new coordinator for FET, there is an ongoing struggle to align the provincial FET plan with the colleges' plans. The same SEDS appointed consultant who

works with the colleges is attempting to help with this at the provincial level. Currently the college CEOs meet monthly with the FET officials but to date these agendas have been dominated by issues of protocol.

By all accounts communication with the DANIDA-appointed Provincial Technical Advisor continues to be good and he has a real understanding of the imperatives and the challenges facing Orbit in particular and the North-West Province in general.

It is hoped that by having all internal vertical communication within the college under different operational divisions that the bottlenecks which tended to develop at campus head level will be eased. Over the past six months the CEO has made an effort to meet and address all staff in small groups. Several staff, especially those most remote from the strategic thinking within the college, regard this contact as inadequate and would appreciate more open and frequent contact with the CEO.

3.1.4 Horizontal communication

Communication between staff of different branches was found to be uneven. Certain joint working groups and subject committees are reported to be unproductive because of problems with unreliable communication and certain staff not sustaining their involvement or fulfilling their commitments.

As already mentioned, a college intranet, or even reliable e-mail access for all staff, would help to address the logistical blocks to effective communication which are cited by several staff as one of the brakes on effective cooperation across the branches. Because the college branches are located at some distance from each other, face-to-face meetings are both time consuming and expensive. The issue of expensive logistics is of real concern to the portfolio and unit staff who are located at the corporate centre and who will need to visit branches and/or surrounding business communities on a fairly regular basis.

Over the past six months, educator communication with other North West colleges has been limited because of staff work loads and fewer combined training workshops. Senior staff have had more contact through the provincial 'bosberaad' and follow-up meetings. Communication across provinces has also reduced although certain FET college personnel from other provinces were invited to participate in the provincial 'bosberaad'.

Four members of the college staff undertook an RPL Study Tour to the Netherlands in order to investigate the possibility of implementing RPL processes across the college.

3.1.5 External communication

Since the establishment of the Linkages and Programmes Unit, external communication with regional businesses, NGOs, SETAs and state bodies such as the Prisons Services has been given more impetus.

Despite the pressure of work, certain of the branch staff who are responsible for marketing have paid increased attention to community outreach through schools, churches and service organisations. In addition, each branch has held an open day. Although this has not been a marketing priority over the past six months, the college also continues to get some feature coverage in the local press and radio.

Orbit continues to have regular contact with SESD supported external consultants in relation to CEO mentoring, strategic planning, and HR.

3.2 SAQA / NQF

Since the establishment of the Linkages and Programmes Unit, Orbit's relationship building with accrediting bodies has become more focused and purposeful. In addition, the Unit staff report that their work is greatly facilitated by the support of the CEO who understands the learnership

and programmes terrain very well. As a result, partnerships have been established with a number of new companies, SETAs and the North West and the MESO ESDLEs. The current intention is for the college to offer skills based unit standards, in particular the fundamentals for a range of learnership programmes.

An example of one of the more productive recent relationships was reported to be with the well organised Wholesale and Retail SETA. An additional development which has the potential to benefit the college, has been the co-option of a member of the regional MERSETA management onto the new college council. This person is also a member of the National Project for Learnerships. He joins another important SETA member on council, a member of CHETA.

The Umalusi alliance has not given the college blanket accreditation and this has resulted in a frustrating process of getting programmes approved.

Since the vast majority of Orbit educators have been accredited as assessors and significant numbers have also qualified as moderators and verifiers, the general levels of understanding in respect of SAQA and the NQF has risen significantly.

Certain interviewees report that there is still a long way to go in closing the theory and practice divide in course delivery. This is said to be particularly difficult to address while the NATED programmes and examinations are still in operation.

3.3 Linkages and relationship building

Over the past six months Orbit has strengthened its networking and relationship building with companies and state employers in the region. However, the staff of the Linkages and Programmes Unit as well as the CEO identified the need for capacity building in specific research skills to assist with the maintenance of an up-to-date system for recording all critical data in respect of new developments. Their immediate need is for training in a project management and/or database software package.

A further concern in this respect is that there should be a well informed person in charge of the learnership and skills programmes at each branch of the college. Much groundwork and a substantial DANIDA investment has already gone into the development of this key area of operation and it would be a pity if the college were to lose impetus as a result of ineffective management of these new projects at the sites of delivery.

3.4 Strategic planning processes

As mentioned under 3.1.2 above, a service provider was contracted by the SESD Programme to assist Orbit with a comprehensive review of the college's strategic plans. By all accounts this process which began in July, has been very beneficial. New, more realistic strategic objectives have been identified and both the CEO and the college council are reported to have learnt a great deal from the process. As the CEO said, "This was money really well spent." The missing link in the college's planning progress is the absence of a provincial FET plan with which to align the Orbit plans.

Most progress has been made in the implementation of the marketing, learner support, and human resources plans. Least progress has been made in the implementation of the plans for programmes. Several informants cited staff shortages at all levels of the institution as the main obstacle to implementing these plans.

3.5 Capacity building of college council and academic board

The new college council has attended two SESD Programme supported training workshops to date. Council members reported that these workshops were useful and that they are clear about their governance responsibilities. In addition, members of the college management reported that

they are pleased with the council members' contributions to meetings thus far. One comment was representative of several made to the researcher by members of management. It was, "They are the best council. They are positive and active and ask important questions".

In contrast with the council, the academic board did not inspire the same enthusiasm. It seems that most educators think that the board is less clear about its purpose and functions. Certain informants reported that there was too much overlap between the role of the board and that of the academic committee. In addition, recent reorganisation has impacted on the board by removing some of its more experienced members. The academic committee was said to be hampered by the uneven and unreliable performance of certain of the subject committees.

Unfortunately the extensive work done by the academic committee in attempting to introduce common examination papers according to a single examination time-table had to be abandoned because of the very different modes of delivery and contexts at the different branches. The time and effort wasted on this exercise undermined the reputation of the committee in the eyes of certain educators.

The SRC members were positive about the SEDS Programme training they had received. Those who were interviewed appeared to have a clear understanding of their role in respect of representing the students' interests in the college. Unfortunately all SRC discussants complained of apathy among the current body of students.

Most members of staff were said to understand the system of governance and to have a reasonable grasp of the functions of the council and the academic board.

Council and academic board in place			✓	Council and academic board not yet in place			✓
STAKEHOLDER TYPE	YES / NO			STAKEHOLDER TYPE	YES / NO		
	Council	A. board			Council	A. board	
Senior management	Yes	Yes		Local community	Yes	No	
Teaching staff	Yes	Yes		Business	Yes	No	
Non-academic staff	Yes	Yes		Higher education	Yes	No	
Learners	Yes	Yes		Other state bodies	Yes	No	

3.6 Capacity building of management

Orbit management was bombarded with training during the first part of this year. Over the past six months, however, SEDS has supported more targeted and strategically timed management capacity development. Management has benefited from and continues to participate in: CEO mentoring, DB 2000 training for the four portfolio managers and selected others, HR policies and procedures, Multi-campus management, as well as the already mentioned strategic planning and review of plans. Certain managers also benefited from project management training and this was said to be particularly relevant at this time and a recipient of this training reported that it had already proved useful.

Certain managers have also enrolled on computer skills courses to facilitate their administrative duties.

The redeployment of senior staff as a result of the reorganisation of the college is likely to raise new and job specific management capacity development needs at both the corporate and the branch levels of the college. The researcher's visit was too soon after the reorganisation to assess these needs with any accuracy.

An important issue which was highlighted by the redeployment of middle management was that of a succession plan and the need for project management training for an additional layer of staff. A few interviewees expressed the view that too few people had benefited from multi-faceted management capacity development and that this left a capacity vacuum when certain of these people were redeployed or left the college.

3.7 Professional development of staff

In recent months the following professional training has been provided to selected Orbit educators:

- Assessment (the majority of staff are now accredited),
- Moderation,
- Recognition of Prior Learning,
- OBE,
- Curriculum Design and Materials Development,
- Project Management and Entrepreneurial Skills and
- HIV/AIDS Policy and Peer Counselling.

Educators reported that the quality of the service providers had generally been good although there had been one instance of misplaced portfolios and delayed accreditation. The Curriculum Design and Materials Development course was reported to be particularly demanding, but worth the effort.

A valid criticism of some of the professional training was that it tends to be too theoretical and this is exacerbated by much of the training relating to policies and procedures which do not apply to NATED programmes. Service providers should be encouraged to acquaint themselves with the educators' current practices before designing their capacity building programmes.

The positive impact of the DANIDA-supported professional development in the SEDS programme priority areas such as the establishment of effective learner support units and HIV/AIDS awareness and policies, continues to show dividends although progress across the different branches of the college is uneven.

3.8 Academic competence in maths, science and technology

During the past six months there appears to have been limited progress in the development of competence in mathematics, science and technology. The college struggles to get staff who can teach mathematics and science up to N6 level. In addition, certain of the practical workshops require modernisation in order to receive accreditation from the SETAS which are concerned with technological skills.

The DANIDA supported PLATO laboratory at Odi appears to have been used mainly for language and communications training during the period under review.

3.9 Learner support services

The SEDS Programme has assisted with the establishment of an effective Learner Support Unit at Orbit College. Since the recent reorganisation of the college, a learner support coordinator has been based at the corporate centre under the portfolio manager for HR and Learner Support. In addition there is a dedicated learner support officer at each branch of the college. Members of this unit were previously constituted as a working group which benefited from DANIDA supported training. They were, and still are, reputed to be one of Orbit College's most dedicated and effective staff teams.

Over the past six months, the unit has sought to align its activities with the latest learner support policies. Unit staff have a close relationship with the SRC and each branch has an established learner support office where students can go for advice or counselling. When students present problems which the learner support officer or the SEDS trained peer counsellors are not qualified to deal with, the officers call on the help of outside agencies which specialise in the area of the student's need.

A valid criticism of the generic counselling and guidance roles of the branch-based learner support staff was that these persons are frequently called on to deal with discipline problems. They feel that this undermines the students' trust in them as non-judgemental advisors and supportive adults. At Odi there was also a request from staff for the unit to contract a registered psychologist to supplement the work of the unit by visiting each branch on a regular basis in order to see students with serious psychological problems.

Over the past six months, the SESD programme has continued to support HIV/AIDS awareness and capacity building by providing training which included peer counselling to selected learners. The SRC focus groups indicated that there is more openness about AIDS. The learner support officers at each branch have year plans for AIDS awareness and other health related events. Certain staff questioned the sporadic nature of these activities and suggested that HIV/AIDS consciousness raising needs to be integrated into every activity and programme at the college.

The current priorities of the Learner Support Unit are:

- The problem of student financial aid.
The allocation for student funding is totally inadequate and the unit staff's attempts to arrange ad hoc assistance with local businesses is insufficient for the scale of need.
- A tutorial system whereby groups of students are allocated to caring and effective educators for academic monitoring and assistance.
This is intended to replace the current ad hoc assistance given to certain learners by their educators.
- A student study and/or resource centre at each branch as well as a facility where students can study after hours.
Thus far Brits has made considerable progress in respect of student study facilities, but reference materials and equipment such as a photocopier, are needed.

Both students and staff point to the lack of canteens or indoor recreation areas for students as an area of real need. One wonders whether catering or entrepreneurial programme staff cannot take up this as a practical problem which their students might usefully address.

3.10 Budgeting

The problems caused by the unevenness of financial management and administration capacity across the branches has been addressed by centralising these functions under a dedicated portfolio manager at the corporate centre.

The review of strategic plans and the restructuring programme has, once again, highlighted the backlogs in staffing. While certain of the personnel gaps at college branches and at the corporate centre might be possible to address from within the college, several posts such as that of a deputy-CEO will be advertised. The college is addressing these issues in co-operation with the North-West Department of Education.

The researcher did not explore current budgetary requirements in any depth because the true extent to which the college budget is adequate for implementing the new functions and priority portfolios is still to be tested in practice. What was evident from this visit was, however, the reduced spending at the branches and the heightened budget-consciousness of all discussants.

4. SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT RATING

Over the past two years the morale of Orbit college staff at the time of each visit has impacted significantly on the rating process. This time, morale at the large Odi branch of Orbit appeared to be better than was the case six months ago when the capacity deficits in its finance and administration systems were causing special concern. In addition, Odi staff regard the recent centralisation of the management of all college operations other than the delivery of courses and programmes, as promising for the future of the branch and for the college as a whole.

In contrast, the morale of the educators at the small Brits branch remained low. Frozen posts and the resultant under-staffing seriously affects individual workloads at Brits and although the generally capable staff acknowledge the logic behind the college reorganisation, they do not anticipate any benefits from the new structure in this respect. In addition, several educators expressed the fear that their professional autonomy might be further eroded by recent changes in both the college and the FET system.

The trend of discussants at Brits and Odi continuing to rate college progress more strictly as the merger process and the transformation of the FET system advance continued. During this visit, the rating discussions tended to be characterized by:

- *many "wait and see" responses because of uncertainty about how the recent reorganisation of the college will impact on individual staff persons at branch level*

This was especially evident among groups which were furthest removed from strategic discussions and interest in the 'big' as opposed to the 'local' picture. The removal of certain of the best informed HODs to act as branch heads or to serve in specialist positions at the corporate centre also appeared to impact negatively on a few of the management groups' ratings;

- *a concern that the views expressed during the rating process "make no difference" because of the general nature of the monitoring and evaluation reports*

With hindsight, this view may have made the evaluator more cautious about imposing her own, often more positive, judgment on ratings where there was an element of doubt.; and

- *a sense of over-familiarity and boredom with the rating process and instruments*
Certain groups appeared to be less interested in the actual rating discussions than was previously the case. Although all discussants were polite and co-operative, the researcher sensed that because this was the fourth time that the same process was being followed, the degree of engagement was negatively affected. There was a sense of 'going through the motions' during some of the rating discussions. This was in marked contrast to the purposeful atmosphere which typified many of the individual and group interviews with college management and specialist portfolio staff.

The researcher's approach to deciding on the combined rating was to take the respondent's reasons for their ratings into account before awarding a rating for each characteristic which reflects these reasons as well as her own observations and information from supplementary interviews about progress at the college.

Vision and Mission

1. Practices guided by a clear institutional vision

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										7
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No Vision or Mission statement	Mission and Vision developed, but have no strong influence on practice			Some shared vision, with some influence on practice, but not shared by all staff			Staff and management share a common vision. This informs their practice.			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management : 7; Odi staff: 8; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 6

All stakeholders agree that the majority of college personnel and SRC members understand and share Orbit's vision and mission. Every branch of the college has many displays of the vision and mission statement. In addition, since the last evaluation visit, the SRC has undertaken some awareness raising about the college's mission with the student body. In general, however, students are said to be disinterested in such broad institutional concerns.

The difference between the group ratings on this dimension reflects the degree to which the staff of Odi and Brits think that the mission statement informs current practice. At Odi, staff and management feel that the recent developments at both branch and college level reflect a more widespread commitment to become a relevant, responsive and open institution. They cite improved college marketing, better relations with the community and industry as well as a more proactive and positive approach to linking college practices with the world of work as marked improvements in this respect.

Brits management and staff are less convinced that the college's vision is influencing practice 'on the ground'. They say that, on the whole, the actual delivery of programmes and courses tends to be much the same as it was last year because "the tools to do the job are not there".

The researcher's decision to retain a rating of 7 is based on a her sense that although there are several positive signs of a common vision influencing different areas of college activities, there are still too many staff who, either for personal or for structural reasons, have retained a "business as usual" approach to their work. This is especially evident in respect of largely unchanged teaching approaches.

2. Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No cohesive value system in operation	Value system exists but not shared by everyone so that value conflict occurs			Increasing cohesion around a common set of values, although conflict sometimes occurs			Staff, management and learners share common values and act in accordance with these values			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5

Brits management and staff acknowledge some progress in respect of teamwork and cohesion at college level, but feel that this is much stronger at the local or branch level than at the macro level. They are especially concerned that Orbit's current priorities appear to undervalue teaching and learning. They report that this has affected the time educators can give to students. This, in turn, is said to affect the student's commitment to their studies. Brits staff are proud of their history of good results and they fear that their students' examination performance will be weaker this year.

Odi management feel that there is improved general cohesion in the college, but that this is undermined by certain staff who are worried about how the current changes will affect them. As a result, certain staff are said to lack motivation and to ignore the professional values of the institution.

Odi staff scored this dimension lowest because of certain staff cliques at the Odi branch. Discussants report that these cliques lack professional commitment and that they neglect students. This results in student absenteeism and disrupts the working environment. These problems are said to affect certain departments and not others because the lax staff try to influence their immediate colleagues.

The researcher's unchanged rating reflects her sense that although the majority of staff subscribe to shared professional values, there is obviously a minority which deliberately undermines value cohesion in an attempt to either:

- avoid facing up to necessary changes in professional practices, or
- to protect themselves and/or their jobs from unwelcome consequences from the restructuring process.

Leadership and Management

3. *Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No functioning system of governance	Some representative structures in place, but mostly in name only. Weak or uneven participation and minimal effectiveness as decision-making bodies. No clear demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities			Representative structures in place and starting to operate effectively, but participation still uneven. Demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities require further clarification			All representatives fully integrated and involved in governance. Effective decision-making, with clear demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 5										
The rating difference between the management and staff groups at both branches reflects the extent to which these groups know about, and feel part of, college governance.										
The management groups are satisfied that all the systems of governance are in place. They have also received positive reports about the college council. They are, however, reluctant to give this dimension a higher rating until the new members of council and the academic board have proved themselves.										
The staff think that the representatives of the academic committees and the academic board have been largely ineffective to date. For example, they regard the work done earlier this year on developing common examination papers as a waste of time. Staff who are active on academic committees also report that getting these committees to work properly can be "very difficult".										
On the whole, educators think that the academic governance structures need to improve their communication with all professional staff so that they become more effective at representing educators' professional concerns within the systems of governance.										
All staff and student discussants regard the SRC as properly constituted and trained (with SEDS Programme support), and reasonably effective. Since the last evaluation visit, the SRC has undertaken certain sports and cultural activities and it has begun its first initiative in social responsibility by establishing an on-going relationship with a children's home. Its representatives are also said to acquit themselves reasonably well at council meetings. The rapid turn-over of SRC members as they complete their courses										

and general student apathy are said to be the main obstacles to optimal student participation in college governance.

It should be noted that the researcher interviewed three members of the new Section 9 College council, namely, the well informed chairperson who was also chair of the previous council, and two new professional women members. These interviews were very impressive and explain the Orbit management's high expectations in respect of the new council which they regard as dynamic and representative of a wide spectrum of FET stakeholders. One of the new members had taken the trouble to prepare a typed presentation about the work of the council. In addition, both she and her co-member displayed a high degree of interest and motivation in respect of their contributions to Orbit in particular and the FET sector as a whole. Both had attended two SEDS supported council training workshops and were especially conscious of the different responsibilities of those concerned with governance compared with the college management.

This rating is increased by one from 5 to 6 in acknowledgment of the progress made in establishing a sound system of representative structures and in recognition of the clarity all governance representatives displayed in respect of their roles and responsibilities. A stronger rating will only become possible once these representative bodies, especially the academic committee, have proved their effectiveness to their various college constituencies.

4. *Effective institutional leadership*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No leadership system in operation	Weak institutional leadership, with general lack of understanding of national and provincial policies. Little or no democratic participation and shared decision-making			Institutional leadership growing in strength and clarity of purpose. Continual building of culture of democratic participation and shared decision-making			Strong institutional leadership, with clear understanding of national and provincial policies. Culture of democratic participation and shared decision-making			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 5; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5										
All respondent groups rate the college leadership as unchanged since the second impact study.										
The majority of respondents regard the college leadership as strong on institutional leadership, understanding of the FET policy terrain and clarity of purpose. However, these strengths are said to be undermined by the leadership's failure to engage in genuinely participatory decision making. In addition, while staff acknowledge that the CEO has become more visible to them over the past six months, several discussants expressed the view that her consultations with them are largely cosmetic.										
These perceived weaknesses are probably a result of the 'old' Orbit structure where all corporate concerns and strategies were driven by the CEO who was alone in the corporate centre. She was, therefore, dependent on campus-based middle management to communicate with all operational staff. Certain of the middle managers appear to have either failed to explain the CEO's strategic leadership role to their staff or to have acknowledged their own roles and responsibilities for college leadership and decision-making. The restructuring of the corporate centre and the expansion of the leadership team should address these issues. It should empower senior staff to be more active in corporate decision making and facilitate a team approach to institutional leadership. In addition, the specialisation of members of the corporate management team should enable portfolio managers to hear and address staff problems before these become sources of division and discontent.										
On one of the campuses, there was a concern that the move to turn campuses into delivery sites will make them resemble schools with more top-down control and a further erosion of educators' professional autonomy.										
The researcher's rating increase of one point to 6 reflects her sense that several discussants' reluctance to acknowledge the potential of the restructured corporate centre for more effective college leadership and more shared decision-making within key areas of college operations, was a little harsh. The researcher										

also has the sense that certain staff have not yet come to grips with the size and complexity of the merged college and the implications of this for the decision making process and the CEO's capacity to relate directly with individual staff.

5. *Effective management systems*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No management information system	Management information systems (MIS) exist or are being developed, but are not operational. Decisions are often taken without adequate access to information			Some planning and decision-making informed by up-to-date management information, but not yet fully operational at all levels			Up-to-date management information systems inform planning and decision making at all levels			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 5; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5										
<p>The recent restructuring of the college and the strengthening of the college's operational plans by situating the management and administration of key portfolios (such as transformation, finance, programmes, personnel and student support) at the corporate centre have the potential to improve the college performance in respect of this dimension. The restructuring should result in better informed implementation of standardised procedures, more effective monitoring of operations and more rapid intervention when required.</p> <p>In addition, there has been a comprehensive review of strategic plans and the further development of key human resource and financial policies and procedures. This was achieved with the assistance service providers contracted by the SESD Programme.</p> <p>During the past six months it has become apparent to college management that the DB 2000 information management system has the potential to serve all the college's record keeping and information requirements. However there is consensus that considerable capacity building in the operation of the database is required for optimal results. The system is generally considered to be user-unfriendly.</p> <p>At the time of this visit, the four new portfolio managers had attended an initial training session on the general operation of DB 2000. In addition, a Brits educator who is well informed about computers and accounting had also been sent for specialist training in the system. Unfortunately the owner-developers of DB 2000 have a monopoly of all service provision and this results in very high training fees. The current training of selected college personnel is supported by the SESD Programme, but any supplementary training for these or other staff will be expensive for the college. An alternative strategy would be for the college to buy the more user-friendly upgrade which is available from the company, but this would also require considerable unplanned expenditure.</p> <p>The Odi management group conveyed the objection of the administration staff to the researcher's comments in the second evaluation report that, "Certain of the former homeland 'Manpower clerks' are under-qualified and are reluctant to use computers. They are said to resist all capacity building opportunities offered to them and are thought to be 'marking time till retirement or being offered a [severance] package'. In effect, these staff cause a block to effective administration and management of information...". The administration staff were reported to have challenged the accuracy of these perceptions. They also regarded the generalisation as unfair.</p> <p>The researcher explained that her comments had reflected the views of several stakeholder groups, but apologized to those who felt that their reputations had been unfairly tarnished. She then spoke to various stakeholders about the current administration at Odi and was assured that matters had begun to improve.</p> <p>Several discussants express the frustration that college staff and students have such limited and unreliable access to the internet. An educator is investigating the possibility of having the Brits branch develop its own intranet. This would greatly facilitate communication between educators and it would also encourage computer literacy among students by enabling them to 'chat' with each other on line.</p>										

Each group's rating on this dimension increased by one point compared with March because the problems with the management of information systems are being addressed although the process is not yet complete.

Knowledge Sharing

6. *Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No sharing and learning between national DoE, provincial DoE, college and campus	Limited flow of information between levels of the FET system. Miscommunication occurs or information arrives too late for effective action			Reasonable communication flows between levels of the FET system, but room for further improvement			Effective upward and downward flow of communication, which enhances performance at all levels of the FET system.			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Odi management: 5; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 3; Brits staff: 4</p> <p>The stakeholder groups rate the vertical communication within Orbit and with the provincial department at the same level as six months ago.</p> <p>Several discussants think that the reorganisation of the college has the potential to improve communications between themselves and the relevant internal and external officials, but they say that this has still to be tested in practice.</p> <p>The appointment of specialist Linkages and Programmes Unit members in the corporate centre means that branch staff and managers considered a rating increase in respect of communication within the FET system, but they opted to wait for more evidence of improvement before altering their ratings.</p> <p>Since the second impact study visit, the NW provincial DoE has appointed a Chief Education Specialist to the FET directorate. Unfortunately, there is still no Director of FET. The focus groups reported that the provincial 'bosberaad' had helped the officials to understand the college's priorities, but that the provincial FET staff would take time to grasp the multi-faceted requirements of the college in the emergent FET system. They say that that it might, therefore, be a while before communication at this level of the system shows real improvement.</p> <p>The rating discussions on this dimension also reflect participant's concerns about the college and branch communication systems. For example, educators complain that faxes from the corporate centre or from colleagues on working committees, frequently reach them late. Several staff would prefer to communicate with colleagues via a more reliable and accessible e-mail system.</p> <p>In the absence of significant improvements, the researcher has chosen to retain a rating of 'low emergent' on this characteristic.</p>										

7. *Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces	Minimal sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces - mostly a case of 'each to their own'			Emerging culture of sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces. Co-operation rather than competition becoming more evident.			Optimal sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces - to the mutual benefit of all			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 4; Brits staff: 5</p> <p>Staff shortages and increased work loads continue to have an impact on inter-campus communication and working groups. Several discussants express a willingness to share and communicate while also complaining that joint committees do not function effectively. Certain committee members are said to contribute once or twice to joint undertakings and then to cease attending meetings. This results in a few individuals driving agendas and having to proceed without adequate feedback from all branches.</p> <p>The ineffectiveness of several subject committees is attributed to the vast distances between campuses which make face-to-face meetings both time consuming and expensive. At a small branch such as Brits, these problems are exacerbated by the fact that a single educator may be required to serve on several working groups or committees.</p> <p>The Odi groups suggested that staff exchanges between different college branches might facilitate communication and co-operation between colleagues by giving them better insight into branch specific challenges and by exposing staff to a wider range of professional practices. They added that telephonic communication between colleagues at different branches is still frequent.</p> <p>Since most Orbit educators have had a break from regular workshops, communication with colleagues at other colleges in the North West Province has diminished. In addition, the implementation of a system of specialist portfolios driven from the corporate centre has resulted in fewer people communicating with other stakeholders in the FET system about activities such as marketing, learnerships and student support.</p> <p>The researcher's unchanged rating reflects her sense is that although there has been progress in the leadership's and special unit's communication across the college and the wider FET system, some of the general enthusiasm for co-operation and exchange between colleagues from different locations has been lost.</p> <p>In September the Odi and Rustenburg branches of the college each produced colourful and informative newsletters about activities at their respective branches. This was the fourth such publication produced at Rustenburg and the first by Odi. These provide a useful vehicle for information sharing with internal and external college constituencies. These efforts have not been recognised in the researcher's rating, however, because none of the focus group discussants mentioned newsletters in relation to any of the issues under discussion.</p>										

8. Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING						4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING						5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING						5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic		Strong Characteristic
No effort made to keep business and community stakeholders up-to-date about developments in FET, to market services, or obtain feedback	Flow of information between FET college/campus sporadic and <i>ad hoc</i> . Business and community stakeholders derive little benefit from having a college/campus in the vicinity – although some exceptions. Limited marketing.			Increasing emphasis on knowledge and information sharing between college/campus and wider community. Results not yet optimal but dissemination and feedback loops improving		Ongoing communication with and feedback from external stakeholders. College/campus perceived to actively seek suggestions, value stakeholder contributions and, in their turn disseminate knowledge and information on a regular basis, including active marketing of services
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7						
8						
9						
10						
Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 6; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 5						
Two developments are said to be responsible for progress in this dimension:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none">two dynamic young educators, one from Odi and the other from Rustenburg, have been appointed to the SEDS Programme supported Linkages and Programmes Unit which is now located at the corporate centre, andthe staff persons who have the marketing responsibilities for each branch have had sufficient time to develop their roles and to initiate new community outreach programmes.						
More recently, the former Odi campus head was made manager of the Transformation, Innovation and Infrastructure portfolio under which the marketing and linkages operations fall. This should add impetus to the progress which has begun to show dividends in respect of knowledge and information sharing with the SETAs and the wider FET community.						
Only the Brits staff feel that little has changed in respect of knowledge sharing with the local business and communities. They said that because the many demands on staff time, there have been no new developments in this respect. The Brits management feel that there has been some, albeit limited, progress on this dimension and cited good communication links with a number of local retail outlets which resulted in holiday jobs for several students.						
Both Odi groups were convinced that external knowledge sharing at both branch and college level had turned the corner. They cited the marketing staffperson's visits to schools in the vicinity, the students' outreach to a children's home and greater general awareness of the college and its programmes as examples of more effective communication with the local community. In addition new relationships have been established with manufacturers and industries such as Willards, Shatterprufe, Bosch, and the Drain Surgeon. Although the Odi discussants only raised this rating by one point, they expressed optimism about the potential for further developments in respect of skills courses and learnerships, especially in the engineering fields.						
The researcher accepted the majority view that external knowledge sharing is currently at the 'strong emergent' level and that there is a real possibility that it will become a strong characteristic by next year.						

Institutional Health

9. The establishment and maintenance of financial health

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
College/ Campus in weak financial situation, with no strategy in place to improve the situation	College/campus in weak financial situation, but starting to remedy the situation. Budgeting, monitoring and credit control still ineffective			Financial situation not yet stable, but improving steadily. Budgeting, monitoring and credit control systems in place - not yet fully effective			Healthy financial scenario established and maintained			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 4; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 7

Odi has had most problems with financial records and the reconciliation of accounts. The management focus group was aware of these difficulties and, therefore, scored this dimension lowest. This group said that as far as Odi is concerned, the second impact rating had been too high.

Brits staff rated this dimension highest, but its score reflects the situation at the Brits branch only.

The other two groups gave this characteristic unchanged ratings. They cited improved standardisation of procedures and more financial control as positive developments, but were not convinced that these had had sufficient impact to justify a higher rating at this stage. They also said that they expect improvements as a result of the deployment of a the former Brits campus manager as the Orbit financial manager based at the corporate centre.

Both management groups complained of inadequate feedback on budgets and, therefore, insufficient information for future budgeting. One of these groups also said that there was insufficient transparency in respect of college spending and that this did not appear to be budget driven.

Because of the range of ratings and views on this characteristic, the researcher decided to leave the rating at the middle of the emergent scale.

10. Adequate infrastructure

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										7
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										7
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Inadequate capacity in terms of physical and administrative infrastructure	Physical and administrative infrastructure not geared for innovation and expansion. Drastic improvement required.			Physical and administrative infrastructure allows some scope for innovation and expansion - further improvement required			Well-developed physical and administrative infrastructure - in line with current and anticipated expansion			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 2; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 6

There is a desperate need for expensive structural maintenance and the upgrading of certain workshops at Odi. It is twenty years since the building was inspected by structural engineers and the two Odi ratings reflect the concern among the Odi stakeholders about the current deterioration in the buildings. Although some emergency repairs have been done since the last research visit, these are said to have been only about 10% of what is required and inadequate because several ceilings continue to come down.

The Brits infrastructure is newer and well maintained, but more classroom space is required in order to cater for the demand for places on certain courses. The management group said that a further five

classrooms, including an additional computer studies teaching room, are required. The lack of adequate security at the Brits branch is also of concern to staff.

Neither campus has an indoor student recreation or canteen area. The lack of these facilities was cited by both student focus groups as the students' most frequent complaint. Odi students also complained about the condition of their toilets. In addition, both campuses need wheelchair ramps to be built in order to accommodate students with mobility problems.

Since the last research visit, the new Orbit corporate centre has opened on the grounds of the Rustenburg branch. It is well appointed and has its own public entrance. However, the latest redeployment of middle managers, specialist units and administrators to the centre has resulted in all the available space being occupied.

The researcher has retained a rating of 6 for this characteristic because the poor condition of the potentially outstanding facilities at Odi counterbalance the infrastructural advance in respect of the new corporate centre.

11. Enhanced human resource capacity

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Human resource capacity totally inadequate	Some expertise, but not adequate. Intensive effort required to build capacity			College/Campus staff mostly have the expertise required, but further enhancement required. Capacity still uneven			All college/campus staff have the necessary expertise to perform their roles. Ongoing capacity enhancement.			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 6; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 7										
<p>The view at Brits is that frozen posts and the increased number of tasks being done by the remaining staff leave educators with little time or energy for further training. Educators remain interested in enhancing their capacity in their specific areas of the curriculum, but on the whole they regard professional capacity levels at this branch as high.</p> <p>Brits management expressed the concern that the custodial staff of two have huge workloads and said that additional cleaning or grounds assistance is required.</p> <p>At Odi, several staff members assumed that they had missed out on some of the SESD Programme training such as the courses on RPL and OBE. Both Odi groups, therefore, questioned the criteria used for deciding who should attend courses and felt that these should be explained to all staff.</p> <p>Odi management suggested that certain administrators require additional training. They added, however, that several administrators and educators had begun to attend the computer skills courses offered by their branch colleagues.</p> <p>Certain educators praised the DANIDA supported training they had received in the DB2000 information system and in Project Management. However, none of the focus groups mentioned the ongoing internal workshops on finances, DB2000, human resources or marketing for groups of staff at each of the branches.</p> <p>On the whole, capacity building has been more carefully targeted since the last research visit. The researcher's decision to keep the rating at 6 is based on three of the the focus group's sense that little had changed although the corporate interviewees conveyed a more positive picture.</p>										

12. Quality Assurance System

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No QA system in place	QA system in process of being developed, but benefits still poorly understood			QA system developed, but not fully implemented. Still some reservations about benefits			QA system fully operational. Understood and accepted by all. Impacts positively on performance			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Odi management: 3; Odi staff: 3; Brits management: 3; Brits staff: 3</p> <p>The situation remains unchanged. This was said to be "not as a result of ignorance, as a result of insufficient time".</p> <p>FTE numbers and learner results are still the only means of assessing general staff performance. Although a few stakeholders said that they did not regard marks as the most useful measure of educational quality, there was no mention of other criteria being developed.</p>										

Responsiveness

13. Good relationships with business

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with business	Minimal/ad hoc partnerships. Stronger focus on relationship building required			Increasing focus on relationship building to establish partnerships which are mutually beneficial			Formal and informal partnerships, with mutual use of resources and benefits to all partners			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Odi management: 5; Odi staff: 7; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 7</p> <p>As was mentioned under Knowledge Sharing, there is a shared perception that Orbit college as a whole is becoming more responsive to the needs of business. However, several of the promising recent initiatives by the Marketing as well as the Linkages and Programmes Units have still to bear fruit.</p> <p>At Brits, many of the partnerships with local business are at an informal level. These relationships are, nevertheless, positive and result in the college being able to place several-qualified students in local jobs every year. In addition, Brits continues to organise the Orbit college stand at the annual show and thereby gain exposure to other businesses.</p> <p>There has been progress at Odi, but this is from a lower base. Businesses are becoming more aware of the skills programmes on offer and this has led to mutually beneficial relationships being established with Firestone, Willards, the Drain Surgeon, Shatterprufe and Bosch. There is also an expectation that further learnership and skills-related engineering partnerships should materialise in the next year or two.</p> <p>Although the college currently shows the potential to progress quite significantly into the strong range for this characteristic, the researcher decided to retain a rating of 6 for the present. This judgement is influenced by the current benefits which accrue to the college from partnerships compared with the level of benefits expected of a modern, truly responsive, FET college.</p>										

14. Good relationships with local communities

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with local communities	Minimal/ad hoc community contact. Little attempt to build relations with poor or disadvantaged sectors of the community			Expansion of community contact to include both advantaged and disadvantaged sectors. Increase in efforts to build relationships			Wide-ranging community support with college/campus an integral part of community activities			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 6; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5

The situation in respect of local communities at Brits is largely unchanged. Contact tends to be informal and mainly with the parents of current students.

A college fun run was organised by the SRC and took place at Brits. This was open to the community and although participation by members of the public was limited, the run raised local awareness of the college.

The Odi branch began from a low base in respect of contact with the local community. Over the past six months the marketing staff have made some significant progress in respect of raising the surrounding community's awareness of the college. Among the initiatives undertaken by the branch are:

- visits to schools
- visits to churches
- visits by teachers and learners from local schools to Orbit and
- open days for parents and learners.

In addition, as mentioned above, the SRC has developed a relationship with a local children's home.

The researcher's rating remains at 5 because progress has been uneven. While the Odi branch has increased its efforts, the Brits branch has not undertaken any significant new initiatives over the past six months.

15. Good relationships with other state bodies

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with other state bodies	Some informal contact/discussions but strong partnerships still to be developed			Increase in partnership building, but not yet well-established at all levels			Active partnership building and collaboration at local, provincial and national level			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5

The situation at Brits is largely unchanged except for an agreement with Potchefstroom University which sends its education students to Orbit for a Saturday morning Computer Literacy course.

At Odi there is a more purposeful attitude in respect of developing short skills courses for particular government departments. The Odi branch of Orbit has worked on a new relationship with the Department of Finance and Treasury and the Department of Public Works. In addition, staff are currently attempting to revive a partnership with the Prisons and to interest the Department of Water Affairs in a training agreement.

There has also been progress in respect of Orbit's communication with certain SETAs since the

establishment of the SEDS Programme supported Linkages and Programmes Unit

On the whole, the focus groups' discussions of progress in relation to other state bodies suggested that the March rating had been too high and that 5 was an accurate rating for the current situation.

16. The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No involvement in learnerships	Some informal contact/discussions on possible learnerships			Some implementation of learnerships, but still in the early stages			Significant implementation of learnerships. A major focus area with ongoing evaluation as part of the process			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 4; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 4; Brits staff: 6										
<p>Since the second impact study visit to Orbit, the responsibility for research and development in respect of learnerships has been given to the SEDS Programme supported two-person Linkages and Programmes Unit. The researcher's interview with the two educators who run this unit showed that they have achieved a great deal in respect of researching and initiating good relationships with several SETAs, the North West and MESO ESLERs, and potential host employers in industry and the mines. Most of these relationships have, however, not yet resulted in a significant number of new learnerships.</p> <p>A very serious brake on progress in this respect is that, to date, the province has only signed a memorandum of understanding with the Services SETA. The college cannot proceed with programmes linked to other SETAs until there are official memorandums of understanding between the province and the SETAs. This is a source of considerable frustration for the college.</p> <p>Currently the college is working on having a Jewelry, a Hair Care and a Fundamentals for Agriculture learnership programme accredited.</p> <p>The single rating increase recognises the recent initiatives taken by the college as well as the fact that implementation is still limited. As the two management focus groups point out, much groundwork has been done, but this still has to show dividends.</p>										

17. The development, provision and evaluation of programmes for the development of small and micro enterprises (SME)

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										5
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No SME provision	Learners have some exposure to principles of entrepreneurship and SME development, but limited links between theory and practice. Staff members have limited expertise in this area.			Entrepreneurship and preparation for self-employment receiving increasing attention. Staff expertise being developed and entrepreneurship included in a range of programmes			Wide range of opportunities in place to prepare learners and community members for self-employment. Entrepreneurship an integral part of all programmes, with strong links between theory and practice			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 5; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 6										
<p>All discussants' awareness of the need for entrepreneurial programmes remains high, but there have been few significant developments in this respect over the past six months. A few selected staff have received SEDS supported training in community entrepreneurship and project development and a Brits group reported that this training had been worthwhile. This explains why this group gave the highest rating on this characteristic. Overall, however, limited staffing and budget constraints at Brits have resulted in 'business as usual' in this respect.</p> <p>The situation at Odi has only changed in respect of this branch having an agreement with Willards to train 36 retrenched workers in small business skills.</p> <p>Overall, there have been insufficient significant developments since the researcher's last visit to justify a rating change.</p>										

18. The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4	
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5	
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										5	
No evidence		Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No short courses		Some informal discussions on possibility of running short courses. Range of needs and possible take-up still to be established			Some short courses introduced but further enhancement required to establish reputation as a provider			Wide range of short courses available. Strategy in place to respond to needs as they arise. Good provider reputation established			
0		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 6; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 5											
The focus group discussants were all conscious of the college's progress in trying to establish its reputation as a reliable provider of quality short courses. All branches were said to currently provide short courses and several educators said that there is a market for further provision.											
The Brits groups rate this characteristic as unchanged because, although there are potential learners for additional short courses in computer, language and mathematics related areas of business studies, the current educators have no time available to fulfill this need. Certain staff already offer short courses in the evenings and during holidays.											
At Odi there has been some improvement in the provision of short courses. The management focus group reported that courses were currently offered in Computer Literacy, Fitting and Turning, Electrical Engineering, Upholstery, Refrigeration and Welding.											
The researcher's increase of one rating point reflects that there has been progress in the provision of short											

courses, but that the market has not been sufficiently exploited to justify a rating in the 'strong' scale.

Teaching and Learning

19. Functioning curriculum development processes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3	
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4	
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										4	
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic				
Curriculum static – same as always	Ad hoc revision of curriculum. Little innovation and limited staff expertise			Increasing focus on curriculum development, but expertise still being developed. NQF requirements still a challenge			Ongoing curriculum improvement and adaptation, linked to regular evaluation. NQF requirements actively addressed				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Odi management: 4; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 5; Brits staff: 4											
<p>The focus groups all expressed the view that little had changed in respect of curriculum development since the second impact visit to Orbit. Most discussants expressed the view that the SEDS Programme supported training in Assessment, Moderation, RPL and, for certain staff, OBE had improved most educators' understanding of the NQF requirements. The current challenge is, therefore, for subject committees and individual educators to embark on a process of curriculum review, design and materials development.</p> <p>Unfortunately, certain educators still have a narrow, instrumental interpretation of curriculum quality and expressed the view that there is no need to change either the curricula or delivery methods while the NATED examinations are still in place.</p> <p>Several discussants echoed the frustrations experienced by the Academic sub-Committee by complaining that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• certain subject committees do not function adequately and fail to communicate effectively with both the Academic sub-Committee and with the educators: and• there are no minimum 'duly performed' or attendance requirements for examinations. <p>In addition, the Academic sub-Committee minutes reflect the concern that many students do not have the required study material and only an estimated 20% are said to buy books. Students' lack of money to buy learning materials makes the provision of resource centres or libraries which have a collection of important texts and reference books, a priority.</p> <p>Both staff focus groups expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which educators were selected for training. They said that they would like to have more say in this process and that the criteria for selecting training candidates should be more transparent. Several educators also expressed relief that they were not being forced to leave their classes to attend workshops as was the case earlier this year.</p> <p>None of the issues raised during the focus groups justify a rating change for this characteristic. The centralisation and management of the Programmes portfolio under the former Rustenburg campus head may help to give more impetus and direction to curriculum development at Orbit.</p>											

20. Quality curricular delivery

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING	4
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING	5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING	4

No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Poor quality learning and teaching. No links between theory and practice and no attempt to produce well-rounded learners	Weak reputation as a provider. Emphasis on improving examination results, with little attention paid to quality of teaching and learning. Holistic learner development not regarded as important.			Quality of teaching and learning receiving increased attention - focus not only on examination results. Holistic learner development encouraged. Relation between theory and practice receiving attention			Quality of teaching and learning a major focus. Strong links between theory and practice and holistic approach to learner development. Enrichment activities in place. Good reputation as a provider			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 4; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 4; Brits staff: 7

Three of the focus groups felt that there had been little change in the quality of learning and teaching at Orbit. The Brits educators were the only group to rate this category as 'high'. They based their rating on the fact that they and their colleagues regard teaching and learning as their primary focus and that several of them monitor learners' performance to ensure that they will meet the required standard. Brits staff also expressed frustration about other college activities taking them away from the classroom and fear that they will not be able to deliver the good results which have established the branch's reputation as a reliable provider.

Certain Odi discussants said that although their enrolments were high, there was a problem with student retention. They explained that some educators were lax about time-keeping and student contact. As a result the affected students are said to lose interest and to 'vote with their feet'. Unfortunately this has a knock-on effect and can impact on attendance of dedicated educators' classes. These discussants feared that, as a result, the examination results at Odi would be poor.

There is an awareness among all discussants that more needs to be done to provide facilities such as resource rooms, computer access and study areas so that students can work on projects and study. There has been some progress in this respect at Brits where a resource cum study room has been set up adjacent to the SRC office which has two computers available for student use. These facilities have already proved popular with students, but more reference materials are required.

The second impact rating of 4 has been retained for the following reasons:

- It is clear that the quality of teaching and learning at Orbit is uneven and that the dedicated educators across all branches of the college would like to see curriculum delivery receive more emphasis from the college management.
The recent reorganisation of the college management places the responsibility for programmes and their delivery under the former Rustenburg campus head. This should help to deal with the weaknesses in the current delivery model, but progress may take some time.
- Several subject committees are not working effectively and, as a result, issues of teaching and learning tend to be side-lined in the college's professional forums.
- There is still a strong expectation among the majority of students that their educators are the repositories of all they need to know and that this knowledge will be spoon-fed to them.

21. Well-functioning staff development processes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING									3
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING									5
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING									3
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic		
No staff development process in place	Weak staff development and appraisal processes. Staff trained on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis, with limited opportunity to express their needs. Staff often inadequately prepared for new implementation			Increased focus on staff development and appraisal. System for on systematic review of needs still being put in place. Staff mostly prepared for new implementation,			Ongoing staff development and appraisal an integral part of institutional activity. Staff confident that they will be trained on new processes before they are implemented		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10
<p>Odi management: 3; Odi staff: 4; Brits management: 3; Brits staff: 4</p> <p>As far as the management focus groups were concerned, the situation in respect of staff development is unchanged.</p> <p>The Odi staff group reported that several individual staff are more aware of the need to take responsibility for upgrading their own knowledge and skills. They said that several people were making use of the college's 85% training subsidy by enrolling on short courses, particularly computer related courses.</p> <p>Brits staff feel that decisions about Orbit staff development have been too top-down. They said that they would welcome proper appraisal discussions which included their being able to make suggestions for their own capacity building.</p> <p>Although individual interviews with college managers suggested that staff development plans were being drawn up and an on-going internal staff development process was being undertaken with small groups of staff in such areas as HR, finances and DB2000, none of the focus groups referred to this process.</p> <p>The single point rating increase is in recognition of the beginning of a staff development process as well as in recognition of certain staff being more pro-active in taking up capacity building opportunities. There is, however, a pressing need for Orbit to institute an effective staff monitoring and appraisal system which is linked to targeted staff development. At Odi, for example, there is a real danger of the efforts of dedicated and knowledgeable staff being undermined and/or overlooked because of the lack of effort by certain of their colleagues.</p>									

Learner Support

22. The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING						2				
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING						5				
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING						6				
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No academic support programme in place	Learners obtain academic support on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis			Educators provide support to individuals. Bridging courses introduced			Dedicated person and a functioning academic support policy in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 5; Brits management: 7; Brits staff: 7

The recent deployment of the former Temba campus head to the corporate centre to manage the Human Resources and Learner Support portfolio and the addition of a Learner Support coordinator to his team should give impetus to the college's plans to prioritise academic development at Orbit.

By all accounts, the learner support team which includes a dedicated and SESD-trained educator at each branch, works well together and has the potential to improve this previously neglected area of provision. Among the priority academic support plans are:

- The establishment of resource and/or study centres at each branch.
- A tutorial system which matches students to talented and caring educators so that they have an academic mentor-tutor whom they can approach for assistance.
- A system of having a classroom and, possibly, a tutor available to students who need to study or to complete assignments after hours. Such an arrangement should assist students from home circumstances which are not conducive for study, to achieve better results.

The Brits focus groups rated this characteristic higher than their Odi counterparts because of the progress made on that campus in providing students with a study area and access to two computers. The educators report that they tend to tutor their own students as and when required. The Brits students verified this and said that they felt able to approach any of their educators for assistance.

In addition, the provision of a laboratory of computers by the SESD Programme has enabled the educator who is responsible for IT, to purchase and install the multi-media, computer-based Reading Excellence programme. This inter-active programme which enables students to work on their competence in English and Afrikaans reading, was demonstrated to the researcher. The early diagnostics show both that the majority of learners read well below the appropriate levels for their ages, and that early progress on the remedial system has been promising. A member of the student focus group volunteered that he had always hated reading and had struggled with texts, but that he found the Reading Excellence exercises enjoyable and that he looked forward to sessions in the laboratory.

At Odi the focus groups reported little change on this characteristic. Certain ad hoc tutoring of students by educators does take place, but the student focus group indicated that students only approach those educators who they know are keen to help. They added that many students do not take the initiative to approach their educators when they are not coping.

Odi's SESD-supported PLATO laboratory and programmes have proved popular with students. The new, SESD-trained, coordinator showed the researcher what had been achieved over the past six months. Among the students who have benefited from the PLATO Windows and communications tutorials such as Fast Track English are those in the following courses: N3A and N3B Business Studies, N3 Hospitality and Catering, N4 Management Assistant and N2 Catering. These students spend an average of an hour a day in the laboratory and the coordinator reports that most have made progress especially in respect of understanding useful concepts in English.

Certain problems have been experienced with the PLATO system, especially with the server. This was removed by the service provider for repair and six weeks later hadn't been returned to Odi. This is unacceptable.

There was a general sense that the previous impact rating on this characteristic was too high because of many focus group participants' had lacked of awareness of what an effective academic support system entails. For this reason the rating remains at 6, which is considered a realistic assessment of the current situation at Orbit.

23. *The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS support programmes*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										7
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No HIV/ Aids policy	Some input given to learners by campus or outside people on <i>ad hoc</i> basis			Educators provide information and support to individuals on request			Dedicated person and a functioning HIV/Aids policy in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Odi management: 6; Odi staff: 6; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 6.										
<p>The student focus groups reported that certain students from each branch had attended a SEDS Programme supported four-day, certificated workshop in HIV/AIDS, peer counseling and support. They also reported that other, related health issues such as TB, were addressed in awareness days. According to the students, the general levels of HIV awareness are reasonable, but as senior students leave Orbit, that the best informed and more active members of the HIV/AIDS working groups are lost.</p> <p>The staff focus groups said that while all branches of Orbit had a programme of activities such as visits from service organisations and awareness raising days, this remained too intermittent, and student involvement was too half-hearted, to have a real impact on student behaviour.</p> <p>The researcher's rating increase to 7 is based on the student's reports and on her sense that because staff had, themselves, become better informed, they were rating this characteristic much more strictly than they had in the past.</p>										

24. The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND FORMATIVE IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No guidance or counselling	Some input given to learners by campus or outside people on ad hoc basis			Educators provide some individual guidance and counselling on request			Dedicated person and functioning guidance and counselling system in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Odi management: 6; Odi staff:3; Brits management: 6; Brits staff: 6</p> <p>Odi staff reported that significant numbers of learners had such acute problems that they required expert counseling from registered psychologists rather than assistance from educators and peers who had attended limited-duration counseling training. They proposed weekly campus visits from a counseling psychologist or a registered therapist. Their argument is that significant numbers of young people in the FET system enter FET institutions because they are troubled and have been labeled as 'rebels' or 'misfits' in their schools. This concern about the lack of adequately qualified counselors accounts for their low rating.</p> <p>The other focus groups reported that the situation as far as guidance and counseling was concerned was largely unchanged since the researcher's visit in March.</p> <p>All groups regard the reorganisation and the more obvious prioritization of a full range of student support services as a positive development, but feel that the impact of this may not be evident until next year. Therefore, the rating for guidance and counseling remains at 6.</p>										

5. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Table 1: Average ratings

Average baseline rating	Average 1 st impact rating	Average 2 nd impact rating	Average 3 rd impact rating
3.4	5.2	5.0	5.3

It should be noted that the timing of the researcher's third evaluation visit to Orbit College was unfortunate because it coincided with the first week in which the new college structure was being implemented. Despite all discussants' approval of this process in principle, 'change fatigue' and uncertainty about how individuals would be affected impacted negatively on several of the focus groups' ratings. An average increase of only 0.3% since March is a reflection of how staff members furthest from the strategic decision-making processes were feeling at the time. The fact that 15 ratings remained the same appears to be symptomatic of their reluctance to acknowledge progress until the effects of the current restructuring have become apparent.

Therefore, a limited rating increase over the past six months should not be interpreted as stagnation or lack of initiative and effort on the part of the Orbit staff. In the past few months an enormous amount has been done to reassess the college's plans according to available capacity; to reorganize the management structure; to increase certain key capacities and to merge vital college operations.

Table 2: All ratings

	DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS	BASELINE RATING	1ST IMPACT RATING	2ND IMPACT RATING	3RD IMPACT RATING
	Vision and mission	Weak	Emerging	Emerging to strong	Emerging to strong
1.	Practices guided by a clear institutional vision	2	6	7	7
2.	Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution	2	5	5	5
	Leadership and management	Weak to emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
3.	Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards	2	5	5	6
4.	Effective institutional leadership	4	6	5	6
5.	Effective management systems	4	5	4	5
	Knowledge sharing	Weak to emerging	Weak to emerging	Emerging	Emerging
6.	Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	3	3	4	4
7.	Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	4	6	6	5
8.	Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	4	5	5	6
	Institutional health	Weak to emerging	Weak to strong	Weak to emerging	Weak to emerging
9.	The establishment and maintenance of financial health	4	5	5	5
10.	Adequate infrastructure	7	7	6	6
11.	Enhanced human resource capacity	4	6	6	6
12.	Quality assurance system	0	3	3	3

	Responsiveness	Weak to emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
13.	Good relationships with business	3	5	6	6
14.	Good relationships with local communities	4	5	5	5
15.	Good relationships with other state bodies	3	4	5	5
16.	The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes	4	5	4	5
17.	The development, provision and evaluation of programmes for the development of small and micro enterprises (SME)	5	6	5	5
18.	The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes	4	5	5	6
	Teaching and learning	Weak to emerging	Emerging	Weak to emerging	Emerging
19.	Functioning curriculum development processes	3	4	4	4
20.	Quality curricular delivery	4	5	4	4
21.	Well-functioning staff development processes	3	5	3	4
	Learner support	Weak	Emerging to strong	Emerging	Emerging to strong
22.	The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes	2	5	6	6
23.	The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS support programmes	2	7	6	7
24.	The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems	2	6	6	6

Since the second impact study, 8 ratings have improved by a single rank each, 15 have remained the same, and 1 has gone down.

The dimensions which improved in aggregate were:

- Leadership and management,
- Responsiveness,
- Teaching and Learning, and
- Learner Support.

Dimensions with the same aggregate ratings were:

- Vision and mission,
- Knowledge sharing, and
- Institutional Health.

There were no dimensions with lower aggregate ratings.