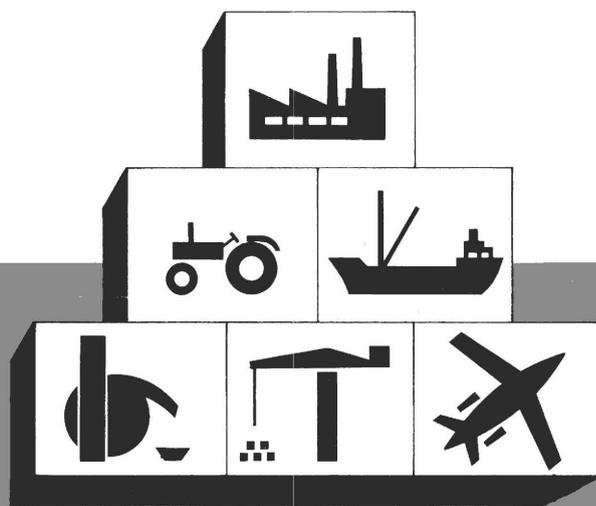


Vocational training

information
bulletin



SUPPLEMENT IRELAND

CONTENTS

- 2 Vocational Education Committees
- 2 AnCO - the Industrial Training Authority
- 3 Company-based training
- 4 Apprentice training
- 5 Training for individuals
- 5 Irish Management Institute
- 5 CERT
- 5 Training in agriculture
- 6 Training centres in Ireland

Appendices

- 7 1. Apprentice statistics
- 7 2. Registered apprentices at 31.12.1975
- 8 3. Principal AnCO courses for adults
- 8 4. Other adult courses available to suit demand from industry
- 8 5. AnCO courses for off-the-job apprentices
- 9 6. Adults trained by or for AnCO (1969 - April 1976)
- 9 7. First-year off-the-job apprentices trained at AnCO centres
- 9 8. Bibliography

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**Vocational training
in
Ireland**

Vocational Education Committees

Vocational education got off to a slow start in Ireland, a country with a long agricultural tradition but only recently beginning to broaden its industrial base. The older systems of education concentrated on the classics and as recently as 1868 only 76 schools in the country were teaching science, a figure which was to drop over the subsequent forty years. There was not any responsible authority for technical education.

The turning point came with the Local Government Act, 1888 which enabled the new county councils to strike a rate in aid of technical education. Since then technical education, subsequently broadened in meaning to be described as vocational, has been a responsibility of the local authorities.

This responsibility was strengthened with the passing of the Vocational Education Act, 1930, under which the Department of Education acts through statutory committees of the county councils and certain other local authorities. The vocational education committees (VECs) have therefore their own corporate status and they do not come within the system of city and county management. They provide and manage vocational schools, employ managerial and teaching staff, and provide vocational and continuation education for their areas. The £16.56 million expenditure of the 38 VECs for the period April to December 1974 was met partly through £13.55 million in grants from the Department of Education and £1.36 million in rates raised by the local authorities.

The VECs withstood the critics who looked upon them as amateur educators and they have been truly described as the only educational authority in the country to represent all shades of the community. They had to overcome the traditional attitude that the technical subjects taught in the new schools were inferior to those taught in the high fee-paying secondary schools which prepared the children of better-off families for the universities and the professions.

In 1964 the Government announced its intention to set up a network of regional technical colleges which would provide courses for the technical leaving certificate, for apprentices and for high level technicians. They would bridge the gap between the second level vocational schools and the third level colleges of technology. The role of the RTCs would be to educate for trade and industry over a broad spectrum of occupations ranging from craft to professional level, notably in engineering and science but also in commercial, linguistic and other specialities. They were to be immediately concerned with providing courses to fill gaps in the industrial manpower structure, particularly in the technical area.

The first five RTCs opened in September 1969 at Carlow, Waterford, Athlone, Dundalk and Sligo. They were soon followed by others at Cork, Galway and Letterkenny, and the new National Institute of Higher Education in Limerick.

In addition to the RTCs and the NIHE in Limerick there are four colleges of technology and the School of Retail Distribution in Dublin providing degree and diploma courses in engineering, architecture, building construction, business studies, catering etc.

The progressive rationalization of post-primary or secondary education in recent years has reduced the distinction in status between secondary and vocational schools. Syllabuses have merged towards a more common ground with the secondary schools introducing certain technical subjects and the vocational schools preparing students for the Leaving Certificate from which they could matriculate to university. The Government's policy of encouraging broad-based community and comprehensive schools is finally laying to rest the idea that technical education is only for the poor man.

In December 1974 the Government announced its new policy for third level education. One intention was to set up a Council of Technological Education to plan and co-ordinate courses and to validate and award non-degree third level qualifications in the RTCs, and two new national institutes of higher education. Discussion on the policy is still continuing in public and in private and there is much uncertainty at present as to future developments. The NIHE in Limerick has recently become a constituent college of the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin (Trinity College) is now awarding its degrees for certain courses in colleges of technology.

There were 267 schools and colleges under the control of the VECs in the academic year 1973/4. The number of whole-time pupils, including those following technological courses at third level was 64 067. A total of 10 834 apprentices were attending part-time courses. There were 4 675 whole-time and 3 010 part-time teachers.

This year 3 100 boys and 1 350 girls will complete the Senior Cycle and do the Leaving Certificate in vocational schools and colleges. A further 10 800 boys and 5 300 girls will complete the Junior Cycle and do Intermediate or Group Certificate. A few years ago it was exceptional for pupils within the VEC system to take Leaving Certificate.

The rapid growth of the RTCs is illustrated by the October 1974 figures of 2 049 boys and 600 girls on full-time courses. Official figures for 1975 are not available yet but they are considerably higher.

The education of apprentices was regulated by the Apprenticeship Act, 1959 which set up An Cheard Chomhairle (The Apprenticeship Board) to cater for training in the designated trade groups of Construction, Engineering and Metal, Electrical, Motor, Furniture, Printing, and Dental Craftsman. It has been the tradition in Ireland for apprentices to combine their training on the job with day- and block-release courses to the vocational schools for which their employers are obliged to release them. They have the option of taking the Junior and Senior Trade Examinations of the Department of Education.

AnCO — the Industrial Training Authority

The Apprenticeship Act, 1959 was repealed by the Industrial Training Act, 1967 which set up An Chomhairle Oilíúna (AnCO) — The Industrial Training Authority which took over the duties of An Cheard Chomhairle. The role of AnCO was however much wider than that of An Cheard

Chomhairle — it was given responsibility for training at every level in industry and commerce throughout the country. It has the general functions of providing for the training of people for the purposes of any activity of industry, and promoting, facilitating, encouraging, assisting, coordinating and developing the provision of such training by such means as it considers necessary or desirable.

AnCO has given priority to the training needs of industry. The professions and activities of primary production in agriculture, horticulture and fishing are statutorily excluded from its scope. Recognizing that the first responsibility for training and development falls upon individual firms it is AnCO's policy to encourage and assist firms to meet this responsibility. It cooperates with other bodies, notably educational institutions and employer and worker organizations, which have related responsibilities. Where training and development needs exist but are not being adequately met, AnCO meets them by direct action following consultation with other interests involved.

The Council of AnCO is appointed by the Minister for Labour, and consists of an independent chairman, five members nominated by the employers' organizations, five nominated by the workers' organizations and three other members. The Council appoints the Director-General and the independent chairmen of the seven industrial training committees which have been set up under the act for the designated sectors of manufacturing industry. These committees, of which half the members are nominated by employer and the other half by worker organizations, along with two other members, act on a voluntary basis and advise and assist AnCO in its work. Representative advisory committees assist AnCO in the operation of its training centres.

Company-based training

AnCO seeks to achieve its overall aims through company-based training, apprentice training and training for individuals.

The absence of a training tradition in Irish industry and a lack of awareness among Irish managers of the value of training was one reason for the setting up of AnCO. It was soon found, as in the United Kingdom, that exhortation and incentives were not sufficient to bring firms to a realization of the need for training. So, a levy/grant system was introduced through which firms above a certain size (which varies from one industry to another) pay between 1 % and 1.25 % of their total emoluments for a specific year into a special fund. In return, they receive back up to 90 % of the levy paid in grants if they follow training requirements laid down by AnCO.

At present there are levy/grant schemes in the following industrial designations: textiles, clothing and footwear, food, drink and tobacco, engineering, construction, printing and paper, and chemical and allied products. These industries employ a workforce of almost 300 000 people in more than 10 000 firms. In 1975 AnCO training advisers paid 17 436 visits to 6 702 of these firms.

Mr John A. Agnew, Director-General of AnCO said last year that 'the levy/grant system, coupled with the free

training advisory service provided by AnCO, has had a marked effect on the training effort by companies. More and more companies are coming to see that training pays in reduced costs and more contented employees. AnCO will soon be having a searching look at the levy/grant approach to see if it is still necessary or whether some other system might be more productive'. With a view to the consideration of alternative approaches AnCO has over the past year carried out experiments in rating the quality and the quantity of training in the food, drink and tobacco, and textiles industries. However, these are still only experiments and as yet there is not any indication when, or if, levy/grant will be phased out.

AnCO gives special consideration to the needs of small firms in the drawing up of its levy/grant schemes and training programmes. Very small firms are not obliged to enter the levy/grant schemes at all but they may opt in if they wish, while smaller firms generally do not have to meet the same requirements as larger ones. AnCO encourages the development of group training schemes and runs training programmes for small firms in Dublin and other parts of the country.

All firms in the manufacturing and distributive sectors of industry may obtain assistance under the Technical Assistance Grants scheme whereby AnCO pays up to 50 % of the cost of attendance at courses by managers and supervisors. The grants are also available for courses for trade union officials and representatives, including those from employers unions. There are more than 90 organizers whose courses have been approved for grants. During 1975 AnCO assisted towards the cost of 7 033 participants attending courses. Grants totalling £292 131 were paid to more than 4 000 firms and to trade unions.

By the end of 1975 there were 1 275 training managers and executives and 1 691 training instructors working in firms. The AnCO Instructor Training Centre had trained a total of 3 644 instructors and demonstrators. These courses are geared to the needs of companies of all sizes. They are for repetitive instructors, craft instructors, apprentice masters, clerical instructors, instructional techniques, booster training, demonstrators, visual aids and job analysis techniques. The course tutors visit participants in their firms after each course or module of a course.

Other services in addition to the courses include assistance on the design and implementation of training programmes and are of particular interest to new companies as well as to existing companies in which new technology is being introduced.

AnCO operates an industrial training grants scheme for existing industry through which firms are eligible to apply via the Department of Labour for matching grants from the European Social Fund. During 1975 approximately £500 000 was allocated to 21 firms for the training and retraining of 1 522 workers under this scheme.

It is possible for new companies which are coming to Ireland to avail of AnCO's services before they start production and to obtain grants for training within the package which they negotiate with the Industrial Development Authority. As well as training instructors for these companies,

AnCO trains local workers on either a sponsored or a speculative basis so that there will be a suitably trained local workforce available when production is ready to start. AnCO advises such companies on suitable training programmes for its staff at all levels to match the conditions which will be experienced in Ireland.

AnCO has more than 100 training advisers based in Dublin and in regional offices at Cork, Dundalk, Galway, Shannon, Sligo, Waterford and Limerick. Their work includes the identification of training needs, advice to firms on the appointment of training staff, assistance in organizing training programmes for staff at different levels in firms, in-depth work on special aspects of training, assistance to companies in meeting the requirements of AnCO levy/grant schemes as well as in preparing submissions for grants from the European Social Fund.

Apprentice training

Apprentice training, or training for skill, to which reference has already been made, has started normally at the age of 15 or 16 years and ended five years later. From the start AnCO has been quite satisfied with the standard of training provided in the part-time courses within the vocational education system but it has been concerned about the provisions for training on the job which occupies the major portion of the apprentice's time. A lengthy review of the system, followed by several years of discussions with all interests involved led to decisions by the AnCO Council last autumn on a new system which is being phased in over a five-year period from 1 September 1976.

All apprentices will receive a period of off-the-job training in their first year, followed by a number of years on-the-job to gain practical experience. The off-the-job training will be in centres approved by AnCO and run either by AnCO, the VECs or industry. All apprentices will be required to attend appropriate day or block release courses in vocational colleges during their first three years. The total period of apprenticeship will be four years instead of five.

A representative curriculum advisory committee will provide and update training and educational curricula for apprenticeship and compulsory testing and certification will lead to the award of a national craft certificate. There has not been compulsory certification on completion of apprenticeship, although many apprentices take the junior and senior trade examinations of the Department of Education.

The decision on off-the-job training results from AnCO's experience over the past seven years in providing such courses at its training centres. While some of these apprentices have been sent by their employers, others have been recruited directly by AnCO and then assisted to find an employer with whom they could complete their training.

Under the new system it will still be the responsibility of the prospective apprentice or his/her parents to get in touch with suitable employers and to inquire about vacancies. When the apprenticeship has been obtained, AnCO which must be satisfied that the firm is suitable for providing a proper apprenticeship, will register the apprentice and issue a card.

For the training of adults and apprentices AnCO has established eleven permanent and five temporary training centres throughout Ireland. The permanent centres, usually on industrial estates alongside new Irish and foreign-owned firms, are at Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Shannon, Galway, Sligo, Gweedore, Dundalk, Athlone and Tralee. Temporary centres are at Letterkenny, Drogheda, Ballina, Kildare and Wexford. Two further centres have opened recently in Dublin.

The trainees are men and women who have become unemployed. Some are sponsored specially by their firms on courses for the updating of their existing skills. About 50% of the trainees have been working directly or indirectly in agriculture, others have become redundant from industry. Courses are also held for first year off-the-job apprentices, sponsored by their companies or by AnCO.

Courses are selected so as to provide a suitably trained local workforce to avail of the new job opportunities. Most of the courses are engineering based — machine operation, welding, general engineering and radio and television servicing. Recently there has been an increase in others, especially those such as office procedures which suit married women seeking to return to employment after several years.

Last year a total of 6 717 adults and 826 apprentices were trained by or on behalf of AnCO. More than 5 000 of the adults and virtually all of the apprentices were trained in AnCO centres or in mobile training units which AnCO sent to towns and villages which were remote from a training centre. Outside institutions, both State bodies and private firms, provided some further training capacity so that an increased number of the unemployed were trained. The VECs made premises and facilities available for short introduction to industry courses for 600 people during the summer.

Men and women aged sixteen or over may apply for adult courses with AnCO. The average length of courses is four months, but they vary from one or two weeks to eight months. Trainees work normal factory hours — a 40-hour, 5-day week from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. There are not any specific educational qualifications for admission but all applicants are called for interview and given an aptitude test which assists in determining their suitability for courses.

Tax-free weekly training allowances are paid. They are higher than the unemployment benefit but slightly lower than what a trainee would be expected to earn in employment after training. Those entitled to redundancy payments continue to receive them in addition to their training allowances. Travel costs are paid for those who live more than two miles from the training centre and accommodation is subsidized for those who have to live away from home.

Last year a total of 813 women, of whom a quarter were married, completed AnCO courses. All AnCO courses are open to women but since the priority training areas have been to a large extent in occupations which have tended traditionally to be male-oriented, only a limited number of women have applied. It is AnCO's policy to try to attract women to these courses and to provide special courses for

women re-entering the labour force. Eight girl apprentices, sponsored by AnCO, have just completed first-year off-the-job courses at the training centres — two in toolmaking at Dundalk, four in painting and decorating at Dublin and one at Cork, and one in motor mechanics at Cork.

AnCO plans over a five year period to the end of 1978 to increase its numbers trained per year to 10 000 at the centres and 1 500 by other means. It now looks as if the target will be reached before that date, as the expectation for 1976 is to train a total of almost 10 000.

It is the role of the National Manpower Service (NMS) to help trainees to find suitable jobs, but AnCO staff give advice and assistance. Employers visit the training centres to interview trainees. Until the present recession and high rise in unemployment the placement rate throughout the country was more than 80% with virtually 100% placement in some areas. This figure has dropped considerably over the past year-and-a-half to 57% last year.

Training for individuals

AnCO works closely with the NMS, which is an agency of the Department of Labour. It is organized into eight regions and its main task is to help people looking for jobs and to help employers to find suitable workers at all levels from unskilled up to professional and management. The service is free and available also to people abroad who wish to work in Ireland and to companies which propose to set up new industries in the country.

AnCO's grant-in-aid comes through the Department of Labour. For 1976 it is £8.5 million, likely to be matched by at least £5 million from the European Social Fund. The total grant-in-aid for 1975 was £5 million with a further £4 million from the ESF. This large increase in a year of austerity when the Government has cut back on many other forms of spending indicates the priority being given at present to industrial training.

The Minister for Labour, Mr Michael O'Leary, TD, has stated on numerous occasions over the past two years that full use must be made of the present slack period in employment to extend the range of skills of the workforce by increasing the number of training places available. 'In the traditional view of the phenomenon of unemployment', he said at the official opening of the Dundalk Training Centre, 'it was accepted that the men and women who were its victims must resign themselves to waste and wait. I have believed instead that the period of enforced unemployment, imposed by external events, which many are presently enduring, must be for the individual a time of intensive preparation, with the rest of working society aiding him in the acquiring of new skills for the new job which will be his'.

Towards the end of 1975, AnCO started a community youth training programme in an effort to meet the problems of unemployed school-leavers. Projects are suggested by local authorities and community bodies and accepted by AnCO if they have a satisfactory training content. Work which would not otherwise have been done is carried out

by teams, each of which is headed by a senior trainee who is an unemployed tradesman. Redundant apprentices are also included in the programme which was started on a pilot basis in the Eastern region and has now been extended to the rest of the country.

Irish Management Institute

Other bodies, apart from the VECs and AnCO, which have a responsibility for training for Irish industry include the Irish Management Institute (IMI) and the Council for Education, Recruitment and Training for the Hotel, Catering and Tourism industries (CERT).

The IMI, a private body of businessmen and firms, provides a comprehensive programme of management development and training. As well as the specialized functions of management — finance, marketing, production and personnel — it caters for the needs of small businesses, of the distributive sector and of specific industry groups and regional areas. The Institute, controlled by a Council elected annually from amongst its members and representative of all sections of Irish industrial and commercial life, receives a State grant through the Department of Labour. For the nine month period to 31 December 1974 it amounted to £225 000 with a further £185 353 from the European Social Fund. This helped to meet a deficit of £494 197. More than 5 000 managers and supervisors attended institute courses during 1974.

CERT

CERT acts under the aegis of the Department of Labour, with a Council which is representative of the various organizations and government departments with responsibility and interest in its function. The Government grant for CERT was £290 000 in 1975. In addition, a grant of £310 406 from the European Social Fund was approved for the period January 1974 to September 1975. Formal training courses for the hotel industry are held at ten centres throughout the country and a total of 1 046 people were trained in 1974. CERT has regional training advisers covering the whole country. Short courses are given under an in-service programme. CERT recruits school-leavers for pre-entry formal training courses for the hotel industry and a placement service is provided.

Training in agriculture

Training in agriculture is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. There are eleven agricultural colleges, three of which are State-run, and six rural home economics colleges for basic training in farm management and related subjects. The private colleges which have adopted the standard syllabus promoted by the Department of Agriculture receive State aid.

The County Committees of Agriculture, set up under the Agriculture Act, 1931, as amended, provide agricultural advisory and other services. Their income of £3.87 million for 1974 came mainly through grants from the Department of £2.14 million and local rates of £1.48 million.

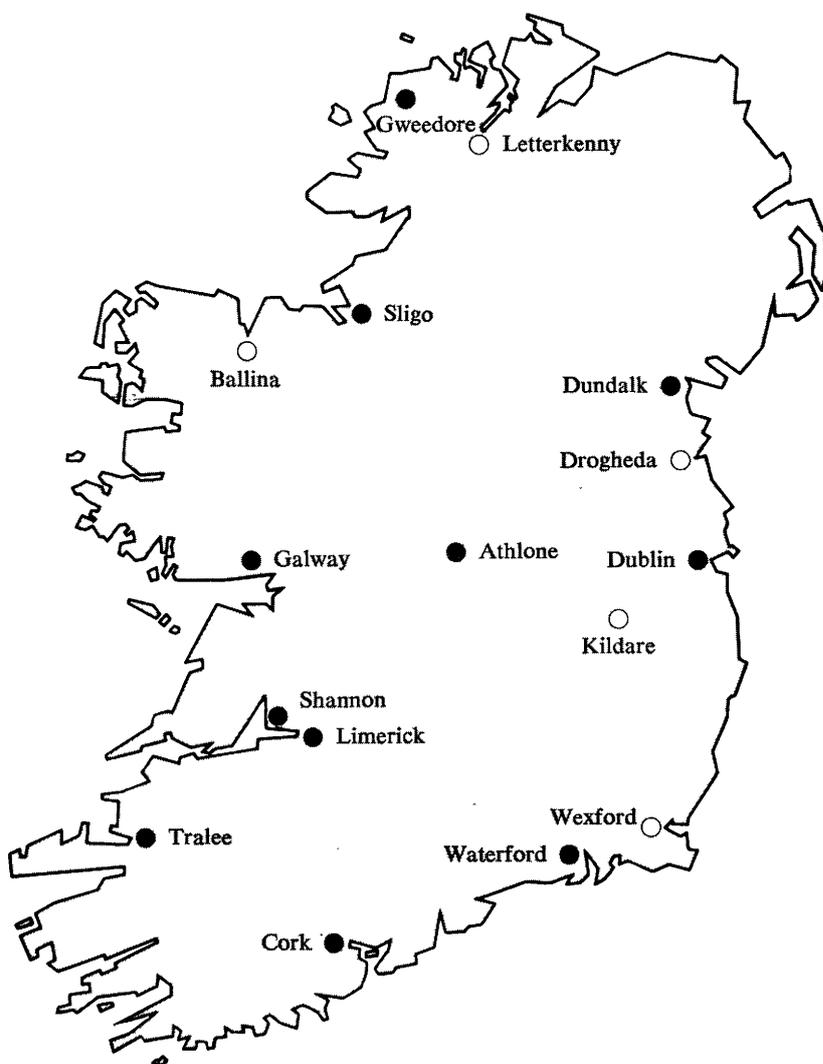
Scholarship schemes for attendance at the colleges are available through the committees. Special 100-hour EEC courses are very popular especially with younger farmers.

The Farm Apprenticeship Board provides in-service training in practical farming leading to a qualification in farm management for young people who wish to pursue a career in farming. It runs a three-year Trainee Farmer Scheme for those who will inherit farms but cannot spend more than a year away from home. The first year is spent with a master farmer and the next two on the trainee's home farm. The Board, with representatives from agricultural

and rural organizations, runs a four-year apprenticeship scheme which follows one year in an agricultural college and is spent on farms approved by the Board.

Macra na Feirme, a voluntary organization of young farmers, introduced a proficiency training scheme in 1971. Courses, which are short and specialized, are designed to improve the skills and knowledge of young farmers in different areas of farming, such as milking machine operation, calf rearing, keeping of farm accounts, sheep shearing, tractor operation etc. The courses supplement existing educational opportunities.

TRAINING CENTRES IN IRELAND



- Permanent centres.
- Temporary centres.

APPENDIX 1
APPRENTICE STATISTICS

	1970/1	1971/2	1972/3	1973/4	1975
<i>Construction</i>					
Total registered	4 193	4 238	4 499	5 140	5 137
Block release	637	509	690	799	935
Day release	1 605	1 593	1 715	1 985	1 792
<i>Engineering & Metal</i>					
Total registered	2 603	2 678	2 761	3 012	3 348
Block release	985	1 120	1 136	1 262	1 303
Day release	510	668	736	746	747
<i>Electrical</i>					
Total registered	2 547	2 519	2 455	2 723	2 790
Block release	1 646	1 743	1 527	1 808	1 520
Day release	180	254	287	378	387
<i>Motor</i>					
Total registered	3 296	3 581	3 730	3 750	3 333
Block release	198	270	333	399	324
Day release	2 543	2 535	2 260	2 308	2 415
<i>Furniture</i>					
Total registered	485	451	447	486	376
Block release	57	83	67	66	36
Day release	175	158	43	62	77
<i>Printing</i>					
Total registered	799	576	563	512	403
Block release	322	357	307	391	266
Day release	—	—	83	74	18

Note : Figures for the nine-month period from April to December 1974 are not included.
All figures listed above refer to 12-month periods.

APPENDIX 2
REGISTERED APPRENTICES AT 31 DECEMBER 1975

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Construction	541	1 024	1 419	1 127	1 022	5 137
Engineering	459	814	802	637	636	3 348
Electrical	379	681	645	447	638	2 790
Motor	301	631	826	829	746	3 333
Furniture	35	54	103	85	99	376
Printing	18	107	95	85	98	403
Dental	1	4	6	7	7	25
Total	1 734	3 319	3 896	3 217	3 246	15 412

APPENDIX 3

PRINCIPAL AnCO COURSES FOR ADULTS

Capstan and centre lathe operating
Milling machine operating
General engineering for operatives
Machine-tool operating (turning, milling and grinding)
Radio and television servicing
Instrument maintenance
Basic electronics and electricity
Manual arc and gas welding
Sheet-metal work
Fabrication (heavy)
Welding and fabrication
General construction for operatives
Bricklaying and plastering
Scaffolding
Heavy goods vehicle driving
Partsman (motor trade)
Fork lift truck operating
Garage operative
Sewing machine servicing
Office equipment servicing
Introduction to industry
Production operative
Clerical course — Office procedures
Junior management
Sewing machine operating
Hairdressing
Spray painting
Panel beating

APPENDIX 4

OTHER ADULT COURSES AVAILABLE TO SUIT DEMAND FROM INDUSTRY

Process operator
Hayshed erection
Wireman
Boiler operation
Marine servicing
Stainless steel polishing
Tool and cutter grinding
Precision machining and setting
Engine tuning

APPENDIX 5

AnCO COURSES FOR OFF-THE-JOB APPRENTICES

Electrical installation
Electrical maintenance
Rewinding
Motor mechanics
Mechanical engineering
Metal fabricators
Toolmaking
Refrigeration
Carpentry/joinery
Painting/decorating
Plumbing
Bricklaying
Plastering

APPENDIX 6

ADULTS TRAINED BY OR FOR AnCO

	Total in AnCO centres	sponsored by employers at AnCO centres	in VECs (inc. RTCs)	in employers' establish- ments	Total
1969/70	446	117			446
1970/71	490	110			490
1971/72	478	90			478
1972/73	1 035	234			1 035
1973/74	2 523	671	1 377		3 900
Apr.-Dec. 74	3 179	613	1 493		4 672
1975	5 302	745	937	478	6 717
Jan.-Apr. 76	2 067	354			2 067
Total	15 520	2 934	3 807	478	19 805

APPENDIX 7

FIRST- YEAR OFF-THE-JOB APPRENTICES TRAINED AT AnCO CENTRES

1969/70	119
1970/71	182
1971/72	184
1972/73	309
1973/74	330
Apr.-Dec. 74	535
1975	826
Jan.-Apr. 76	91

APPENDIX 8

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