

2015-2016 PEARSON AWARD FOR THE PROMOTION AND DELIVERY OF SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIPS.

CITY COLLEGE PLYMOUTH

Work-based Learning and Schools Partnership Team (WBSP)

WORK BASED LEARNING AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS APPRENTICESHIP/TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME.

The Planning: Purpose and Process

- The programme was established in 1995 to offer exemplary practice in supporting the development, promotion and delivery of Apprenticeship Frameworks along with Traineeships which is responsive to both the needs of employers and learners. In recent years, these programmes were adapted to aid employers recovering from a sustained period of deep economic recession. The college provides outstanding partnerships with employers which has enabled the development of a skilled workforce by:
 - developing and maintaining effective partnerships with employers and educational institutions to support impartial advice and guidance.
 - responding, developing and implementing new Apprenticeship/traineeship frameworks that offer flexible and innovative teaching in line with employers' needs.
 - delivering new bespoke Higher Apprenticeships (designed with employers).
 - supporting the local economic plan and local LEP in building Apprenticeships within the priority growth sectors
 - recognising the skills and talents of a diverse population and provide them with a flexible entry route into Apprenticeships.
 - supporting employers to fill hard-to-fill vacancies - particularly in STEM sectors.
 - creating high-quality bespoke volume of training by employers, resulting in a sharp increase in Apprenticeship numbers.
 - championing under-represented groups in specific sectors; with initiatives such as 'Women into Technology' resulting in improved participation rates by women.

Planning into Practice

- The college approached the delivery of its Apprenticeship programmes in terms of how it meets two key challenges. The first is ensuring that the programme meets the diverse needs of local employers in an increasingly competitive economy. The second challenge is ensuring that the provision is truly inclusive; attracting and supporting vulnerable young people who otherwise would consider Apprenticeships as a route that is closed to them.
- In response to the needs of the local economy, the department has a strong ethos of localism. This has led to an exceptionally diverse array of frameworks on offer.
- In response to the needs of learners, the department is highly inclusive: 10% of all apprentices declared a disability. The WBSP Team has strong connections with pre-employment delivery. This enables highly effective promotion and seamless transitions into Apprenticeships for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Where apprentices are at substantial risk, the team conducts specialised multi-agency case conferences to keep them on track.
- Across the whole college, every service area and curriculum faculty promotes and supports recruitment and development of the programme by employing Apprentices within their own staff. To date 96% of these Apprentices have progressed into a full time post within the college.

- Apprenticeships/Traineeships are offered in over nine sectors including Engineering, Construction, Retail Commercial Enterprise, Business Administration, ICT, Education and Training, Science and Maths, Health and Creative and Cultural.
- A case study with Babcock International exemplifies the college's many successful employer partnerships. Until 2010, Babcock International had managed the delivery of their apprenticeship provision independently. Due to the on-going changes to funding and the forming of the National Apprenticeships Service, Babcock made the decision that all apprenticeships contracting would be placed with the college, although it continued to employ existing Babcock NVQ assessors on a freelance basis. This allowed for the specialist knowledge and understanding of the company's in-house assessors to be retained and provide consistency and continuity of learning. This was a novel solution of how to develop and implement flexible/innovative teaching and learning assessment methods which overcome barriers to accessing learning and an example of a collaborative approach between a business and the education sectors.

Continuing Development

- The Apprenticeship Programme undergoes rigorous management and quality assurance. Productive partnerships with employers have provided continuity between the college provision and training in the workplace supported at all times by effective management of qualifications, resulting in the outstanding achievements of learners each year and to sustainable employment.
- The programme is monitored weekly and remedial action is taken immediately where necessary, to ensure outstanding teaching and learning, but also the continual optimisation of programmes to ensure all stakeholder needs are met.
- Learners engage in quality assurance through participation in termly focus groups covering Sustainability, Equality and Diversity, Teaching and Learning, Health and Safety and Safeguarding. This gives staff and learners the opportunity to feedback directly to the management team. In addition, all staff are observed by members of the management team and undertake peer reviews to improve performance and share good practice.
- The Team is determined to keep improving and widening its provision to meet the skills needs of employers and the career aspirations of learners. Since 2011, the college has invested £8.5m in refurbishing and delivering to its staff new facilities in Engineering and Construction, which includes staff training, new equipment and a real working construction site environment built to industry standards.
- In 2016, the building of a major state-of-the-art STEM centre commenced in partnership with Plymouth City Council which will inspire, encourage and teach learners in key priority growth sectors of the city.

Outcomes/benefits to date

- The innovative approach at Babcock International had several advantages from the perspective of the company; firstly, it enabled seamless transition for all apprentices who continue to be guided by assessors with whom they have developed a rapport; secondly, the approach has enabled the company to access additional staff training for all their assessors, including teaching qualifications and NVQ Level 3 advice and guidance and; thirdly, the partnership between the two organisations has enabled college lecturing staff and assessors at Babcock to share industry-specific skills. In addition to this, Babcock International has benefitted by being able to outsource the reviewing and monitoring for apprentices to the college, meaning that it retains the expertise of its in-house assessment team without having the administrative burdens associated with funding arrangements and monitoring.

- The college benefited by being able to make significant improvements with the safety culture of its staff and apprentices by adopting Babcock's standards for other engineering apprentices. The college has passed these best practices onto the wider business community
- Most recent years' data:

Year	Success rate	No. of Learners	College Framework rate	National Framework rate	+/-
2013/14	Overall	429	85.3%	72.3%	+13
	Timely	481	68.8%	56.2%	+12.6
2014/15	Overall	617	86.6%	68.9%	+17.7
	Timely	622	74.8%	54.8%	+20
2015/16	Overall	534	86.2%	68.9%	+17.3
	Timely	549	75.1%	54.8%	+20.3

- The Award money has been used towards purchasing new equipment and resources for pre-apprenticeship/traineeship programmes to develop ICT skills, for example iPads/tablets and e-portfolios.

Relevance and Replication

- The college provides an excellent service to employers. This service is well linked to the identified skills needs of the area. It offers employers support in the recruitment, selection and tailoring frameworks for their businesses. The college set out to offer a high-quality and inclusive service to all and achieves this by putting the learner at the heart of what it does. There is a strong promotion of Apprenticeships using partnership as a way of accessing those who might not otherwise know about these opportunities. The college runs a scheme of Apprenticeship ambassadors where existing Apprentices talk to their peers in schools and elsewhere.
- The college deliberately targets those usually underrepresented in Apprenticeships and is successful in recruiting them and supporting them to progress to employment. Apprentices get a very high standard of experience including innovative learning activities, enrichment programmes and enhancement to the core framework. Success and progression rates are very high. Apprenticeships sit firmly in a whole-college strategy to enhance employability and skills levels in the area.

For more information, please contact:

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