



2015-16 UCAS PROGRESS AWARD FOR CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

WESTON COLLEGE

Careers Education and IAG Team ASPECT

The Planning: Purpose and Process

The college serves a wide-range of both urban and rural communities and operated within a landscape of poor GCSE prior attainment and a local economy linked strongly to seasonal work connected to the tourism industry. The Student Progression Team was created in 2012 to support students coming to college, during their studies and on to the next part of their student journey. The demand on the service and the importance of Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEIAG), employability and partnership work increased so much that the Student Progression Team was rebranded in 2014, to become ASPECT.

- The aims of ASPECT were:
 - to deliver innovative, effective and impartial CEIAG to local school pupils and college students through a well-established and recognisable team of four Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) staff supported by two graduate trainees
 - to create a programme of careers to deliver impartial, college-wide IAG to prospective and current students
 - to raise aspirations through activities, events, tutorials and 1:1 guidance interviews
 - to use (Labour Market Intelligence) LMI to promote and identify realistic opportunities in education, employment and training in line with national and regional priorities
 - to develop a student responsive IAG service and identifiable brand for an accessible IAG offer
 - to work with college-wide colleagues, local schools and employers to develop a robust approach to IAG and employability.

Planning into Practice

- The ASPECT project adopted the following principles:

○ accessibility and visibility	○ impartiality
○ effective connections	○ professionalism and knowledgeability
○ availability, quality and delivery	○ responsiveness
○ diversity	○ friendly and welcoming
○ awareness	○ enabling
- The college established a wide range of graduate trainees in the college with some graduates rotating through business support functions and others specialising in specific areas.
- ASPECT worked with a wide range of stakeholders to effectively deliver the project:
 - *employers*: effective partnerships in the field of CEIAG were embedded at every level of the organisation, with local employers represented on the governing body. There were links with LEP and with major local employers such as EDF, which ensured that local LMI and regional priorities were accounted for in both curriculum design and IAG
 - *schools*: partnerships with local schools were key. The team employed 12 college HE students to work in local schools as mentors, supported by school coordinators
 - *key influencers*: ASPECT'S work focused on students' key influencers, parents and teachers. ASPECT coordinated school staff CPD, hosted away days for the Local Authority and gave talks at parents' evenings to demystify FE
 - *external networks*: the IAG, Careers and Student Progression Manager and Strategic Lead for School Partnership were part of a number of external networks involving local schools and FE institutions so best practice can be shared
 - *higher education*: partnerships were created with universities to provide effective IAG for students wishing to proceed to HE. Alongside HEI school liaison teams, aspirational and informative activities were held for students.



Continuing Development

- ASPECT is managed by the IAG, Careers and Student Progression Manager within the department of Partnership and Progression. The manager is trained to level 4 in IAG and the department's strategic lead is both level 6 qualified and an assessor in IAG. Current members of the ASPECT team are undertaking their IAG level 3 qualifications under the tutelage of the strategic lead. New team members undertake the qualification in their first year.
- The ASPECT team is managed through collegiate systems of 1:1s, appraisals and performance reviews.
- Bespoke quality assurance paperwork was implemented to record observations of the IAG delivery including inclusivity and equality and diversity as well as soft and hard skills such as active listening and securing the student an outcome according to their needs.
- The performance of the team is measured in the departmental strategic annual review, quality improvement plan and priorities reflected in the strategic plan and appraisals of the team. Each academic year, the ASPECT service is relaunched and promoted heavily to ensure that both staff and students are fully aware of the service.
- Students are able to access ASPECT appointments outside pre-planned drop-in times, at a time and place that suited them. ASPECT's content on the college's VLE, Moodle, has increased and HE and careers sections are prominent in each campus library. The service structure was reviewed in 2015/16, with a UCAS lead and Employability and IAG lead being recruited.

Outcomes/benefits to date

- In 2014/15, 54 curriculum activities were funded by ASPECT. In 2015/16, there was a 115% increase in IAG interventions, the total to July 2016 being over 2,000 interventions and in 2014, UCAS cycle applications increased by 4.9%, above the national average of 3.3%.
- The UCAS cycle number of students going through clearing decreased by 25% in 2014, whereas nationally this increased by 7.4%, demonstrating the benefit of the individualised, appropriate and specific IAG. In 2016, there was a 50% increase in successful applications to Russell Group universities.
- ASPECT engagement with students and key influencers increased by 25% in 2014/15 and the project was awarded the LEP Employability Chartermark and the Matrix Standard.
- Engagement with schools from year 7 onwards is a key feature of the project, with over 1,000 year 10 students benefitting from taster days to support transition to the college.
- The award money was used to fund a North Somerset careers event for all the secondary schools (12) in the county. The event promoted all post-16 options in the area, as well as hosting exhibitors from HE and employers.

Relevance and Replication

- There are features to this project which make it special and give it the potential for transferability across the sector. These include:
 - the graduate trainees' professional development model
 - the positioning of the provision, establishment and recognition of the ASPECT brand
 - the use of both traditional and new media to create a wide range of differentiated resources.
- This provision is unique within a FE college setting and the college has hosted six visits from other colleges to provide an insight and share best practice.

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