Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes

East Berkshire College
“Educational and social inclusion continues to be an outstanding feature of the college. In 2013 Ofsted also recognised the very good progress learners make from Foundation Learning through to Higher Education and employment/self-employment. Maths and English are integral to this success, with over 2,000 enrolments each year delivered by a highly specialist team of over 20 maths and English teachers. The Study Programme is enabling us to enhance learners’ entitlement and experience, with greater flexibility to innovate with accredited and non-accredited programmes.”

Virginia Barrett, Deputy Principal

About the college

East Berkshire College is a medium sized general further education college. We are an inclusive college, offering a diverse range of courses for young people and adults from pre-entry to Level 5.

There were 8,458 learners enrolled in 2012/13. 2,976 FTE were on full-time courses and 5,482 were on part-time courses. 2,330 FTE Learners (2,912 SLNs) were 16-18 years old (78%) and 646 FTE Learners were adult (1,602 SLN's) (22%). Provision for 16-18 year olds represents 73% of our guided learning hours.

The college has two main campuses, in Langley and Windsor. Langley College houses most of our vocational programmes including Construction, Accountancy, Engineering, Technology, Hair and Beauty, Health and Care and Sports. Additionally we take learning wherever it is needed – to the Aspire Centre in Slough trading estate, care homes, youth and community centres, Job Centres and much more.

Expectations and opportunities for learners on Study Programmes

In line with the college’s high expectations of all learners and its ‘Expect to be Challenged’ mantra, all learners are encouraged to “Standout”. There is therefore a strong partnership between staff and learners to achieve their qualifications. In addition, learners compete regionally, nationally and on the world stage – and have fun in a range of activities. As examples:

- Engagement in regional, national and World Skill events and for two consecutive years, Visual Merchandising learners won gold and silver medals, with national winners and finalists in other areas.
- Level 3 Health and Social Care learners last year joined colleges around the country to participate in the Guinness World Record for the most students
attending an Infection Control lesson at the same time. The world record was met.

- Volunteering learners also supported local businesses to design a Video Mural, support local charities and much more. Art and Design students also successfully took on the challenge of working on a prominent mural in the college’s new build at Langley.

The college has invested in the work readiness of learners. This includes:

- A £30m redevelopment project at Langley, providing exemplar work-ready environments. This includes an “Innovation Hub” which will develop multi-disciplinary knowledge and skills, particularly in STEM, Entrepreneurship and learner-led thematic commercial projects, providing real solutions for employers. Additionally, all programmes operate in modern, bespoke, flexible and independent learning facilities, to develop employability skills for immediate transition into the workplace. For example:
  - A Health Simulation Suite, which enables learners to practice the skills they will need in a hospital environment. It also gives employers an opportunity to provide updated training for their staff.
  - An Orangery for LLDD Social Enterprise initiatives, which embed maths and English and develops work-ready skills.

- In response to Labour Market Intelligence, the college’s re-development also includes a brand new, much needed provision in Hospitality and Catering, launched in September 2013. From its inception, students’ work-readiness has been at the forefront of planning and delivery. As a result, the pilot provision with the Royal Windsor Racecourse (September 2012 – July 2013) gave our first cohort of students experience in a real work environment with opportunities to undertake work experience and part-time work. Tom Kerridge is now Patron of the new restaurant and the Hand and Flowers’ restaurant Head Chef is providing Master Classes for students. Equally importantly, students from Levels 1 to 3 are catering for corporate events, including those from blue chip companies and major public officials.

The college has also invested in developing sector-specific employability skills. In ICT there is a Microsoft Academy, a Cisco Academy and a Comptia Academy. These enable ICT learners to develop industry-specific skill sets which are integrated from Level 1 through to Level 5.

**The Study Programme Structure**

For 2013-14 the college planned a Study Programme learner entitlement of 540 hours within most curriculum areas. The core framework was maths and English,
a substantial Vocational/Academic offer, work experience, tutorial and other non-accredited qualifications, such as enterprise and entrepreneurial initiatives, revision classes and tasters in academic writing for learners progressing from lower levels.

The hours for each of these elements do vary according to the level of study, with a clear curriculum guideline in place to support planned and actual delivery. For example at Entry Level and Level 1, learners have more hours for maths and English as well as more tutorial topics to support their emotional and social well-being.

All learners from Foundation Learning through to Level 2 have work experience, including those already in part-time work. For the first two terms of the year work-ready skills are the internal focus, following which personal tutors find appropriate placements for learners. Variations to this enable learners not yet ready for external work placements to be placed internally or have a supported work experience. Social Enterprise opportunities are used with Foundation learners, to develop work skills and the confidence to progress into external work experience and supported work experience.

A successful partnership has been established with Learning to Work\(^1\) (formerly the EBP) to source block work experience placements for 310 students in construction, business, travel and tourism, ICT, motor vehicle, art, science and media. Additionally, placement coordinators ensure traditional mandatory placements in areas such as Childcare and Health and Social Care are undertaken alongside these programmes.

Cross-college progress review weeks have been put in place for each half-term. During these periods learners sign up in workshops for common units on social and emotional well-being, employability training, UCAS applications training etc. This collegiate way of working also gives us an opportunity to provide non-qualification tasters to support re-coursing and progression. Group and 1:1 tutorials also take place during these weeks, which support effective and efficient ways of enhancing young people's learning. In summer 2013 over 350 learners took part in enterprise activities, which supported them to develop employability skills and explore the potential to establish their own business. This will take place again this year, with a higher volume of learners.

Traineeships (short and intensive to make up a full Study Programme) are being piloted this year, with a core entitlement of maths, English, employability training and work experience; approximately 30 learners are on this pathway. Maths, English and employability training are timetabled for learners to flexibly infill on entry and progress into work placements when they are ready. All learners elect

\(^1\) http://www.eastberksebp.org.uk/
to study a vocational award or certificate. Employers supporting traineeships are required to provide learners with an exit interview.

For the future, learners at Level 3 will be required to engage in internships through the Innovation Hub, thereby providing business solutions to employers and gaining real experience themselves.

**Maths and English as generic employability skills**

Maths and English are at the heart of Study Programmes, with central grid positions around which all subjects are required to timetable; learning entitlement and planning are informed by initial assessments, to raise learners up a level. Diagnostic assessments are used to profile strengths and weaknesses and inform lesson planning. Cross-college maths and English profiles, informed by qualifications on entry and initial assessments, are monitored each year to ensure learners are being appropriately placed on courses and challenged in their learning.

In September 2013 the college removed GCSE Foundation for maths and English; we now offer higher level GCSE maths and the single tier English Edexcel Certificate (approved version of the International GCSE). Level 2 Functional Skills or higher tier Grade D are pre-requisite grades to progress to Higher GCSEs.

In responding to the Wolf Review, the college consolidated its Basic Skills department of over 20 specialist maths and English staff in 2011-12. These staff have GCSE, A Level and a specialist qualification in their chosen subject and have been supported to deliver to GCSEs, whilst GCE A Level teachers have retained responsibility for advanced delivery. We are currently planning to further develop our maths and English delivery to ensure succession planning and further improve embedded/contextualised expertise.
The Employability Passport

As can be seen below, the college developed an “Employability Passport” in summer 2013: All Study Programme learners are now required to use them on work placements.

East Berkshire College Students are...

- Resourceful
- Enterprising
- Adaptable
- Driven
- Dynamic

Work Ready is...

The College’s mission is to provide opportunities for you, our learners, to thrive and achieve in life and work, and therefore, work readiness is an intrinsic part of learning at East Berkshire College. As well as high quality training and development in industry-standard workshops and other simulated environments you will be supported to develop a range of soft skills, which are demanded by employers. Consequently, this Work Ready Passport captures 5 key employability skills (READY) identified by employers: Resourceful, Enterprising, Adaptable, Driven & Dynamic. On leaving East Berkshire College this Passport will be your evidence that you are READY for the world of work and Higher Education.

Passport Record & Validation

**Resourceful**
- Shows initiative
- Able to communicate ideas
- Can self-manage
- Has IT skills
- Is literate and numerate
- Is confident

**Enterprising**
- Creative
- Is able to identify opportunities
- Innovative
- Able to take calculated risks
- Business/customer awareness

**Adaptable**
- Can problem solve
- Can work in a team
- Is flexible and resilient

**Driven**
- Time management
- Is motivated
- Forward thinking
- Improving performance

**Dynamic**
- Can negotiate and be persuasive
- Can inspire
- Self-starting