Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes
Leicester College
“Study Programmes at Leicester College are enhanced by a framework for personal professional development (PPD) which enables every young person to reach their full potential.”

Kathryn Johnson, Assistant Principal 14-19 and Higher Education

About the college

Leicester College is the only general further education (GFE) college in the City of Leicester and one of the largest GFEs nationally. It is the largest single provider of both 16-18 and 19+ FE and Workplace Learning in Leicestershire at around twice the size of the next largest institutions.

Leicester College recruits around 70% of its learners from the City and the remainder from the wider County area. In 2011-12, around 26,000 learners studied at the college, 82% of whom were part-time and 18% full-time, delivering to 20,028 adults, 5,146 16-18s and 852 under 16s. It has continued to meet the needs of the diverse local population with 44% of its cohort coming from areas of deprivation, 42% from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and 3,488 learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability. With 3,753 ESOL enrolments, it is the largest provider of ESOL within the East Midlands region.

The college delivers the broadest vocational provision in the County, offering a wide range of programmes from Entry Level to Level 4. It offers provision in all sectors, with the majority of enrolments in vocational areas. It is an Associate college of De Montfort University and provides higher education programmes franchised from DMU and other universities as well as programmes funded directly by HEFCE. Seven hundred and seventy seven of the college's learners in 2012 progressed to higher education.

The college has an annual budget (2011-12) of £54 million and 1,500 staff. It operates on three main campuses in the City of Leicester and provides education and training in many community venues.

Structure of Study Programmes for 2013/14

The strategic vision for the college's Study Programmes is to maximise the potential of young people to progress onto higher education and/or skilled employment, by ensuring that vocational routes to higher education and employment are seen as high quality and a genuine alternative to academic routes.
Programmes have been designed to enable entry at an appropriate level. The balance between qualification and non-qualification activity is determined by the needs of the individual learner and their desired destination. The main qualification is the key driver initially, coupled with the appropriate level and quantity of English and maths to enable progression. On some programmes, for example at Entry Level, the main qualification is English and maths, with employability skills and smaller vocational tasters.

Programmes have been planned to enable learners to access provision at a level they may not have been able to do so before, thereby facilitating progression.

**Hours on a programme**

The hours allocated to programmes vary according to the needs of an individual learner.

On average, the number of hours allocated to Study Programmes across the college is 651 hours.

At Entry Level, the hours allocated are generally between 540-600 hours. Disaggregated, a high proportion of hours are allocated to maths, English and employability skills, with a small element of vocational activity.

At Level 1 and 2, most programmes allocate between 540-580 hours. Most learners will be undertaking 2 Functional Skills aims on these programmes.

At Level 3, programmes range between 550 to 630 hours, with the vocational element of the programme accounting for approximately 380 to 400 hours. In some areas, the programmes at Level 3 run in excess of 800 hours, with a high proportion of activity allocated to work experience, Child Care being an example.

**The approach to the development of maths and English**

At the beginning of the year, the Curriculum Area of Science, maths and Humanities timetabled GCSE English and maths provision at each of the 3 sites. This was planned before any other activity, with curriculum areas building their timetables around the GCSE offer.

Pre-GCSE assessments were offered to internal learners prior to the summer in 2013. Those who were not successful were given guidance on the areas they needed to develop, with a follow up assessment during enrolment in September 2013. New entrants with Grade D GCSEs were invited to the Pre-GCSE assessment during enrolment. Any learner not achieving 40% pass rate was directed to study a
relevant functional skill at Level 2. Over 1,000 assessments were carried out during this period, with a high percentage of learners being directed to study Functional Skills. Successful learners are now studying towards the GCSE re-sit programme.

The college is currently offering Pre-GCSE assessments to any learner studying a Functional Skill Level 2 in either English or maths. The Functional Skills lecturer receives the results from the screening and, if necessary, supports the learner to work on the gaps in knowledge. The learner then re-takes the Pre-GCSE assessment, with the view to embarking on the GCSE re-sit programme in the autumn.

The college is working on building capacity to delivery GCSE maths through the maths Enhancement Programme being run by EMCETT¹, with its first cohort of staff due to complete this year.

Other non-qualification activity – the Personal Professional Development (PPD) Programme

The college has developed an exciting approach to managing the delivery of employability skills. These skills have been identified and prioritised by STEMNET² (which works nationally to engage young people in STEM subjects) and the local Chamber of Commerce. They have highlighted the most important skills that employers have said they want in prospective employees.

Not all students on Study Programmes undertake work experience (as in working at an employer’s premises), but all students follow a Personal Professional Development Programme (PPD). The PPD supports the development of employability skills, enterprise activities, staying safe and healthy, equality and diversity and current affairs.

Specifications for the programme have been developed centrally and include activities at Level 1 and Level 2. Themed weeks have been planned into the programme; for example, Employability Week, where activities across the college will take place. The Federation of Small Businesses will provide keynote speakers on aspects of Business start-up and the potential pitfalls to avoid.

Leicestershire Cares³, a local organisation which promotes volunteering, will be providing learners with opportunities to undertake ‘mock interviews' with volunteer employers from the local region. Local employers such as Mitchells and

¹ http://www.emcett.com/professional_development
² http://www.stemnet.org.uk/about-us/
³ http://www.leicestershirecares.co.uk/
Butlers, the National Space Centre and De Montfort University are providing inspirational talks on careers in their industries and the benefits of higher education.

Other topics explored through the themed weeks range from those with a direct focus on employability to study skills, equality and diversity matters, understanding citizenship and democracy, and support for health and welfare issues most relevant for young learners.

The programme has been developed around an existing, successful Enrichment Programme, commended by Ofsted and valued by learners. For 2014/15 the college plans to appoint ‘Learning Coaches’ who will deliver the PPD in curriculum areas. We are recruiting people with specialist skills in the fields of youth work and careers guidance to do this.