Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes

Trafford College
“The Career Academy is a fantastic initiative that fits perfectly with the aims and ambitions of Study Programmes for 16-19s. It is a concept ‘whose time has come.’”

James Scott, Assistant Principal, 14-19 Learning

About the college

Trafford College was created in September 2007, as a result of the merger of North and South Trafford Colleges. It is a medium sized FE college spread over three campuses which are based in Old Trafford, Altrincham and city centre Manchester, and is one of ten general FE colleges that serve the city region. In addition, the college operates in numerous community venues throughout the Borough, and has a Retail Skills Shop in the Trafford Centre. The college provides learning opportunities for nearly 3,000 young people, 4,000 adults and approximately 1,000 apprentices. Provision within the college broadly covers nearly all sector skill areas, and consists of an extensive portfolio of programmes ranging from A Levels, Vocational Courses at all levels, Work-Based Learning, Community Learning, Foundation Learning and higher education.

The college is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted and is part of the 157 Group of colleges. In addition, the College has National Skills Academy status for five sector areas: Financial Services, Hospitality, Retail, Sport & Active Leisure and Environmental Technology.

Situated in the south-western part of Greater Manchester, Trafford is currently home to about 210,000 people, representing 8.5% of the Greater Manchester population. The borough is diverse, prosperous and culturally vibrant, with significant population growth forecast in the coming years. Trafford has important centres for industry and business with major and long established industrial estates; a high quality natural environment including leafy suburbs; and some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country.

The borough is home to one of the most significant employment areas in the northwest of England, Trafford Park, and has an enviable diversity of nationally and internationally renowned cultural and sporting attractions. Unemployment levels overall in Trafford are below the national average, but there is a degree of polarisation within the borough. Trafford is educationally one of the most successful local authorities in the country, and still retains a selective secondary system.

Study Programmes at Trafford College
Trafford College has created a flexible approach to Study Programmes to ensure they meet the needs and interests of a diverse range of learners. The amount of planned hours is bespoke to the individual programme area, but on average Study Programmes at the college are around 600 hours per year. Most of these hours are timetabled and delivered by a teacher. However, some programme hours, such as work experience, do not involve direct teacher contact.

Learners at Trafford College undertake a Study Programme in one of the following pathways:

- GCE A Level programme – with a likely destination of HE or employment (approx. 350 learners)
- Applied Vocational programme – with a likely destination of FE/HE or employment (approx. 1,400 learners)
- Occupational Vocational programme – with a likely destination of employment or FE at the next level of competence (approx. 900 learners)
- Foundation Learning programme – with a likely destination of FE at the next level or employment (approx. 250 learners)
- Traineeship programme – with a likely destination of employment or FE (approx. 30 learners)

All Study Programmes at Trafford College consist of the following elements:

- A substantial core qualification in an academic or vocational discipline that leads to good progression outcomes
- English and maths for all learners without a grade A*-C or above in these subjects at GCSE – delivered discreetly and reinforced through integrated learning within the other elements of the Study Programme. The college will be introducing higher level maths and English for some learners with a GCSE grade C or above from September 2014, if this supports progression
- Work Experience and Work Related Learning for all students, including the development of employability skills
- A range of non-qualification activities to support achievement and progression including volunteering, the National Citizen Service scheme and enrichment
- Dedicated tutorials including 1:1s to review progress, study skills and personal development opportunities

Meeting the needs of the local and city region economy through Study Programmes

As part of the re-design of curriculum necessitated by Study Programmes, Trafford College has taken the opportunity to continue to refine the curriculum so
that is more responsive to the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local/city region economy.

In order to address this, the college has taken the following steps:

- Ensuring the curriculum offer is clearly aligned to the key growth areas of the local/city region economy
- Working in partnership with Career Academies UK\(^1\) to provide high quality opportunities for learners in key growth areas, including provision of paid internships, industry mentors and a weekly seminar programme of master classes from employers (see below)
- Developing an employability skills framework, in consultation with a range of employers, to ensure learners develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors required by employers across the local/city region
- Providing a base entitlement for all learners on a Study Programme to access a minimum of 25 hours high quality work experience/work related learning per year
- Establishing a college recruitment company, Trafford First, to support learners into meaningful employment at the end of their course, if that is their chosen destination

Alignment of curriculum offer to key growth areas of the local / regional economy

The college has invested in ensuring the curriculum offer evolves to meet the skills needs of the key growth areas of the local/city region economy. These areas include:

- Science, Engineering and Low Carbon
- Financial and Professional Services
- Digital and Creative Technologies
- Sport, Leisure and Hospitality
- Health and Social Care

The college has just launched a new Centre of Excellence for Science, Engineering and Technology at its Talbot Road site, strategically situated on the borders of Salford and Manchester. Learners on Study Programmes at this new centre are benefiting from world class facilities that reflect the current demands of industry, as well as access to a wide range of employers who are working in partnership with the college.

\(^1\) http://www.careeracademies.org.uk/pages/about-us.html
In addition, the college is establishing Advisory Boards of employers in each of these key sector growth areas, who work in partnership with the college to help ensure that the curriculum offer is fit for purpose and to provide a range of opportunities to support learner employability, including the provision of work placements.

The Career Academy Programme

The College works in partnership with Career Academies UK in order to provide high quality opportunities for learners on Study Programmes to access the world of work and develop the skills that employers are demanding. Each Career Academy is monitored and supported by one of the Advisory Boards of employers mentioned above, and is already fully established in the areas of Financial & Professional Services and Sport & Active Leisure. Career Academies in STEM and in Creative & Digital Technologies are being launched in September 2014. The Career Academy is marketed as part of the college's Study Programmes offer. Students are not guaranteed an automatic place on the programme and have to undertake a recruitment and selection exercise.

Learners who benefit from the Career Academy are currently on a Level 3 Study Programme – either on an A Level pathway or a vocationally relevant pathway. Each learner receives a high quality, six week fully paid internship placement with an employer; an industry mentor for 18 months of the programme; access to a weekly seminar programme delivered by a range of employers; and provision of a highly prestigious employability skills development programme delivered in partnership with Deloitte. This latter programme is currently accredited by Level 2 and 3 Work Skills qualifications.

The students who benefit from this programme receive the very best opportunities to prepare for the world of work including six week fully paid internship placements; a business mentor for 18 months; and a weekly seminar programme delivered by employers. The programme at the college is supported and monitored by an Advisory Board of employers who work with us to ensure our curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local/city region economy. This is partnership working that truly bridges the worlds of education and industry to enable young people to raise their aspirations and progress into highly successful careers.
A framework for employability skills

Through its efforts to ensure all learners have access to high quality work related learning opportunities, Trafford College is committed to enabling all learners develop the core employability skills that are necessary to support successful transition into employment and progression within the workplace.

The college has been working closely with a project called Aspirational Futures² – led by a number of educational partners throughout Greater Manchester. This project has identified, with employers across a range of sectors within Greater Manchester, the key capabilities and personal attributes that young people need in order to be successful in the workplace. The feedback from employers has been developed into a framework that has received endorsement from the GM Chamber and the GM Commission for the New Economy.

The framework of capabilities and personal attributes that employers value is as follows:

Capabilities:

- Communication
- Making Connections (teamwork)
- Creative Problem Solving (enterprising)
- Thoughtful Decision Making
- Moneywise
- Seeing the Bigger Picture
- Transferability
- Emotional Intelligence

Personal Attributes:

- Proactive
- Resilient
- Aspirational
- Flexible
- Empathetic

The college aims for all learners to develop these capabilities and personal attributes where necessary and appropriate throughout their Study Programme. Further, the college works with all learners to enable them to articulate meaningful examples of their own capabilities and attributes through a CV, personal statement or interview.

² http://www.aspirationalfutures.co.uk/
There is an induction session for learners that outlines these capabilities and attributes, and enables learners to reflect on their own development and experience in relation to them. In addition, learners are expected to refer to their own development of these capabilities and attributes through their electronic CPD portfolio. Learners' understanding and recognition of personal qualities is supported by staff, through interactive teaching, learning and assignment setting.

**Work experience and work related learning**

Trafford College believes it is essential that all young people have access to high quality work related learning opportunities to support their transition into employment and ultimately successful careers.

The college provides an entitlement for work experience/work related learning for all learners that is a minimum of 25 hours per year. This time is in addition to the main core hours of the Study Programme but within the 600. In many cases the amount of time spent on work related learning is much greater. This applies to all young people on an Applied Vocational, Occupational Vocational, or Foundation Learning programme of study. Learners on a Traineeship spend the core part of their Study Programme in the workplace. In addition, all GCE A Level students are entitled to access specific work related learning opportunities where appropriate to their needs and interests, including access to the Career Academy programme.

The college's definition of what constitutes work related learning includes the following activities:

- Structured work placement
- Paid or unpaid internship of at least 4 weeks duration
- Employer led projects/competitions/assignments
- Employer led seminar programmes – either delivered in college or externally
- Employability skills programmes involving employer input and delivery
- Enterprise activities and programmes
- Skills and employability competitions
- Business/industry mentors
- External trips to employers' premises
- Structured volunteering placements and programmes

All departments within the college provide a bespoke package of work related learning within the Study Programme from the list of activities above to meet the needs and interests of their learners.

To support the monitoring and recording of this, every learner has an electronic CPD portfolio delivered through the college e-tracking system: Pro-Portal.
Learners and staff ensure that this portfolio is regularly updated and that it provides details of any work related learning activity, including duration, and evidence of how it has contributed to a learner’s overall development as an individual. This is monitored and discussed as part of the tutorial process.

The college is planning to significantly scale up the amount of external work placements for learners from 2014/15 with support from our college recruitment service, Trafford First.

**The Trafford First recruitment hub and learner progression**

Trafford College has established a clear priority around the progression of Study Programme students into employment, where their intended destination is not higher education or further study within the college.

To support with this priority, the college has established a new recruitment service, Trafford First, which engages with employers to source external opportunities and has the following aims in relation to Study Programmes:

- Increase the number of students accessing apprenticeships/job with training upon completion of their course
- Support with the sourcing of Traineeship placements and matching of suitable candidates for these opportunities
- Support with the sourcing of work placements and internships for students on a Study Programme

Trafford First has a physical presence at Altrincham, Talbot Road and the Trafford Centre Skills Shop.

Staff within the Trafford First support with the matching of students into vacancies, and provide support in relation to NAS registrations etc.