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## Collaborative curriculum design providing clear line of sight to work: Leeds City College

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### Brief description

Leeds City College's level 3 diploma in theatrical, special effects, hair and media make-up provides a blend of practical and theoretical teaching and learning pedagogies that has been co-designed with industry partners. The course also provides students with a clear line of sight to work through meaningful and relevant experiences of the real world of work.

### Overview – the provider's message

'This course offers far more than enrichment, work-experience and placements. These activities are not additional or a bolt-on but are embedded into the course. In fact, they are the very core of the course. This, and the fact that all of our tutors are highly skilled and qualified practitioners within the vocational area, ensures that from initial interview to course completion and beyond, learners are provided with a programme that gives them a clear line of sight to work.

From the first day of the course, our students gain confidence through working with professional photographers, developing portfolios as they go. At six weeks, they have already had their first professional shoot. Small businesses are putting much back into the community and to future professionals by enabling our students to work with them in this way and gain from them. Our new state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities significantly



enhance students' vocational experience. In fact, these facilities mean that the whole course has employment and employability at its very core.'

*Kim Wray, Curriculum Area Manager, Hairdressing and Media Hair and Make-Up*

## The good practice in detail

Central to the design and delivery of the theatrical, special effects and hair and media make-up curriculum, is a core and tailored approach that provides a clear line of sight to work.



The characteristics and features contributing to the success of this provision include:

- establishing employer engagement for genuine collaborative curriculum design
- endorsing content of specific units, modes of delivery and assessment plans to meet employers' needs
- collaboration with large companies in the City to secure professional work-experience that provides assessment opportunities in real-life settings, with real opportunities for future employment
- editorial opportunities through quality photographic images of all work to create a diverse professional portfolio for each learner
- embedding employability skills development, including maths, English and digital literacy.

## A clear line of sight to work

The essence of vocational teaching and learning in this area is grounded in employability and employment.

A continual focus on employment and employability are key features of teaching, learning and assessment and are embedded well into [all lessons](#).

- Learners are challenged to think and explore the range of employment opportunities that their programme offers.
- They are pushed to think well beyond the more traditional employment that this course leads to and explore roles such as: embalming; hospice and cancer care; and mortuary work.
- Placement opportunities and project working promote students' learning as well as embedding [equality and diversity](#) into the curriculum.

Investment in staff and staff development have been central to continual improvement in this excellent provision. Teachers and trainers identify their own vocational and teaching learning needs throughout the year. They have many and varied opportunities to update

their skills through work placements, master classes and college led events. Frequent, challenging observations of teaching, learning and assessment maintain and improve standards in the classroom.

Learners are guided to use social media sites to support their learning, gain help and share ideas actively and safely. They take and upload photographs of their work for the rest of the group to analyse and critique.

Multi-media are pivotal in teaching and learning. A single learning session can involve the use of use tablets, video clips, recordings, theatrical props and make-up and paper-based activities. Insert photo in the state of the art facilities-open in 'paint'

Real life web-sites are used to reinforce learning in particular in literacy and numeracy. For example, price lists of different make-up options on a range of web-sites are used for quick calculations, estimation and multiple additions and then to evaluate profit and loss margins.

## Embedding a two-way street

Developing relationships which both sides benefit from have been pivotal in embedding a two-way street. This was not a challenge for the vocational teaching and training staff, rather an obvious way of working. As highly experienced vocational experts, they have significant involvement in, and connections to, this curriculum area of theatrical, special effects and hair and media make-up.

- Learners benefit from a wealth of real-life work opportunities they are given, combined with the time and resources that many employers offer freely, such as life photo-shoots after only six weeks on the programme.
- Teachers and trainers have taken time to explain to employers the content and assessment of the course and, consequently, employers have an excellent understanding of the curriculum, the needs of vocational learners and the opportunities that they, as employers, can offer.
- The curriculum team has collaborated with employers to ensure that vocational qualifications that meet the shared aims of employers and individual learners.
- Many aspects of the curriculum are employer designed and led, particularly the design and delivery of additional and bespoke units. Employers frequently work alongside teachers in the classroom, delivering master-classes, to provide vocational



learners with extra vocationally-relevant skills and knowledge over and above curriculum requirements.

- In the long term, employers benefit from highly qualified and skilled employees who can hit the ground running.
- These partnerships are used exceptionally well to ensure learning is current, inspiring and meets changing industry needs and fashions.



A significant benefit of developing this way of working with employers is the opportunities they provide for vocational learners in the workplace through access to industry resources and experiences. Learners work as part of film and photographic teams, developing their vocational skills and those of speed, dexterity and taking and following instructions. Literacy is seamlessly embedded into this learning and into the resulting written analysis and assessment.

### **Industry-standard facilities and resources**

The new state of the art building, opened in September 2013, provides a stunning mix of resources where employers and vocational teachers and trainers can work side-by-side to provide a curriculum rich in vocational teaching and learning. As such, it is strengthening the two-way street between providers and employers because the building and resources are providing spacious modern facilities for learning and practice.

Experts from companies with the City are invited into College throughout the academic year and provide up-to-date and relevant master classes. This has increased learners' appreciation of the standards expected in industry.

### **Clear escalators to higher level vocational learning**

Addressing progression from the outset is paramount to ensure meaningful learning and ultimate employment. At the first six-week review, all learners are expected to discuss future career goals and ambitions providing a clear line of sight to employment.

- Vocational teachers and trainers are very realistic about career opportunities and encourage vocational learners to think proactively about all of the opportunities their qualification can offer.
- Learners are encouraged to think beyond film and theatre to consider careers, such as medical make-up and camouflage, wider beautician and beauty therapy roles, art and other therapeutic activities and museum work.

- Employability is at the heart of teaching, learning and assessment. Progression routes and aspirations are covered from induction to the end of the programme and beyond.
- Former learners are also invited to talk to current students about different work roles, developing vocational skills and in the delivery of workshops.

The curriculum offer has been designed to ensure that further skills development is available at levels 4 and 5 for learners who want to advance their career opportunities. The team is currently developing a Foundation Degree in conjunction with Teesside University which will further develop provision pathways.

## Provider background



The college operates from five main campuses in Leeds, a campus in Keighley and a network of community centres. Almost 30% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, as compared with 11% within the city of Leeds. Unemployment in Leeds is higher than the national average, as is the number of young people not in education, employment or training. The number of school leavers gaining five or more GCSEs, including English and

mathematics at five A\* to C is lower than the national average. A high proportion of the college's learners are recruited from areas of high socio-economic disadvantage.

## Background

*It's about work...* the summary report of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) highlighted characteristics and features of outstanding vocational teaching, learning and assessment. These are in line with the criteria for judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Ofsted's *Common Inspection Framework for FE and skills 2012*, but also focus on the additional, distinctive processes of design and delivery which characterise excellent vocational provision.

The case studies in this set were compiled in response to the CAVTL report which highlighted the importance of ensuring a 'clear line of sight to work' on vocational programmes.

The Education Training Foundation has been asked to take forward the recommendations from the Commission's report.

## Other examples in this set

Barking and Dagenham (employability): [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140003](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140003)

Barking and Dagenham (motorsport): [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140004](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140004)

Bridgwater College: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140005](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140005)



Exeter College: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130259](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130259)

Foxes Academy: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140006](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140006)

Hull College: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130258](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130258)

People and Business Development Ltd: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140009](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140009)

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust:  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140008](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140008)

Wendy Shorter Interiors: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140010](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140010)

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

To view other good practice examples, go to:  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/goodpractice](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/goodpractice)