

Annex 14

Telford College – working to meet employers needs





Working to meet Employer Needs

Telford College is strategically committed to being an integral and collaborative stakeholder within the local economy, holistically preparing students for employment. By working with employers, we collectively make a major contribution to meeting the skills need and economic success of the Marches Area and the West Midlands.

We put employers at the heart of the local skills system by inviting them to be members of the Strategic Growth Hubs.

The **Health Hub** engages with local and regional National Health Service (NHS) Trusts and the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System (STWICS) in considering the most effective collaborative working arrangements to facilitate increased recruitment to health and social care related employment and developing the existing work of the STWICS People Plan.

"We can already see the impact of this collaborative working; attrition has been substantially reduced and this results in improved care for local people. You cannot put a price on that." (Simon Whitehouse, Chief Executive of STWICS)

The **Digital Hub** is responding to the local need for increased recruitment to digital roles across all business sectors within the Marches area. This activity is specifically linked to the Station Quarter Project, funded by the Towns Fund Board, to create a new Digital & Maths Skills Hub in Telford town centre. Collaborative work with key local employers, to design a new curriculum that is accessible from a Town Centre location, will use innovative teaching and learning practices to raise student aspiration whilst uplifting the current skill level of the local community.

The **Engineering Hub**, which includes large employers such as Avara Foods and Muller, is successfully supporting the design and development of apprenticeships, adult courses and study programmes.

"With this level of engagement we ensure that the skills being delivered at the College are aligned with the skills required to carry our various business forward for the future." (Alan Filmer, Manager at Muller)

The College continues to significantly invest in the industry-standard facilities, to ensure students can effectively hone their skills in preparation for employment. Every curriculum area has a bespoke part of the campus that celebrates the unique requirements of that industry. Where appropriate, curriculum is designed around 'live briefs' that have been commissioned from local employers, to incorporate a plethora of skills beyond those within the qualification and that are reflective of industry expectations.

As SDF1 lead in the Marches Education Partnership, the College has driven improvements to the facilities and offers available in health and social care and construction. The introduction of a simulated hospital ward and health care support worker training programme has accelerated the recruitment and improved retention within the local NHS Trust, resulting in an agency cost saving of over £1 million.

As part of SDF2, the college has developed a pioneering training centre for cutting-edge green technology that includes a series of renewable training rigs, which gives students the chance to learn about specialist services such as solar panels, electric vehicle charging and air source heat

pumps.

"The new training centre will make sure existing installers and students have the skills needed to take their place in the renewable energy sector." (Mark Thompson, Managing Director, AceOn Group)

The College's adult curriculum compliments that of young people to further support the levelling-up agenda and local skills priorities. With courses ranging from pre-employment to level 5, flexible distance short courses to full time professional courses, there are a wide range of options for adults locally.

Employability programmes meet the skills needs of the low-skilled and unemployed, as well as those made redundant through recent events. Working with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), job centres across the region, and local employers, sector-based work academy programmes include a suite of qualifications for students to be successful in their chosen career. Building on the success of the HGV sector-based work academies, and the collaborative working with driver training providers, the College successfully trains candidates as part of the DfE bootcamp initiative, helping to reduce the national skills shortage of HGV drivers.

"I have now been fully accepted by the transport division at Culina Stafford as a fully fledged LGV/HGV driver. I am over the moon. From start to finish, it has been brilliantly enlightening...a whole new world of driving standards, and I am proud of myself for my personal application to all of the teaching modules." (David Webb, Bootcamp student, 2022).

Contribution to Skills Needs – External View

During their inspection in February 2022, Ofsted reviewed the College's contribution to local, regional and national skills needs and reported the following:

"Leaders and managers have worked well since the merger to ensure that the curriculum offered by the college, including for learners who have high needs, closely reflects the skills needs of the local regional and national economies. They work with key stakeholders and employers through employer hubs in areas such as health, digital and engineering to understand the changing skills needs in the local and national context. They use this information well to tailor the curriculum to respond swiftly to these needs. For example, in response to the need for a significant number of lorry driver s post Brexit, the college offers qualifications and license upgrade opportunities to adult learners who wish to enter the profession through its sector work academy programmes."

Source: Ofsted Inspection Report – February 2022