

Annex 16

Hereford Arts College

Using Creativity to Support Business





Hereford College of Arts is this year celebrating 170 years since the opening of the first government funded Art and Design school in Hereford but its curriculum is focused on creative education for the modern world.

Hereford College of Arts (HCA) works with a wide range of businesses to support students' personal and professional development. Real world commissions from external clients or 'live briefs', have long been at the heart of its provision and feature across all curriculum specialisms and levels. Traditional work experience placements are hard to secure in the creative sector, particularly in a rural area, however the college has been working inventively with external partners to design off-campus projects to develop student confidence outside the studio/workshop, and this is now central to its strategy. Furthermore, the college is increasingly looking beyond the creative industries for its partners, demonstrating the impact creative skills can make in many different contexts. For example, Performing Arts students have been working with SEPAR International Hereford which specialises in training professionals for challenging environments and locations. Students role-play crisis situations for participants in their training programmes, including demanding kidnap and hostage situations. The students support the company in its frontline business whilst learning to work with a wide range of people under pressure and perform to a professional brief under exceptionally intense conditions. Alongside technical performance skills the commission requires problem solving, listening skills, and commitment to task completion.

Wye Valley NHS Trust is another important partner and Hereford College of Arts works with several departments. Performing Arts students have again proved a valuable

resource for the Trust when, for example, they were briefed by a team of consultants to help in the training of Foundation Year doctors, performing patient scenarios in Hereford County Hospital's simulation suite. Students were then invited in to debrief with the doctors and clinical team and were encouraged to ask questions and share their insights from the simulation process. This was an exceptionally high-quality professional learning experience for the students whilst the doctors fed back how lucky they were to have professional actors there and how much it added to the scenarios.

Meanwhile students on HCA's Digital Futures and Interactive Media programme have been supporting Wye Valley Trust in a range of recruitment campaigns. This year they are working on two separate digital media promotional recruitment campaigns to attract different audiences to the Trust's Youth Volunteer IMPACT and Adult Volunteer Programmes. This project is not only helping the hospital meet its immediate volunteer resource needs but is supporting students to develop digital and marketing skills that are in demand from businesses regionally and nationally.

The college has made continued development of digital skills a priority within its strategic curriculum planning. In addition to launching Digital Futures & Interactive Media (UAL Creative Media Production and Technology) at FE it has new HE courses in development. It recently convened a new employer liaison group bringing together different kinds of local business from the creative digital sector. The liaison group is part of an ambitious employer engagement strategy supporting a step change in the range and quality of college collaboration with business. The liaison group format proved highly productive and identified a number of ways in which businesses can support further off campus work experience, for example through the design of 'micro' work experience employer encounters which may be more feasible for small companies. As a response to the employer liaison conversations the college is now exploring ways to support their business staff development further, for example, by considering how it might provide access to speaker events and workshops with some of the exceptional range of visiting industry professionals the college hosts within its main programmes. Investment in a new Vice Principal role has also been supported by the Board to help drive these innovations in employer engagement further.

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