

Northern Ireland - Manufacturing Skills for Industry

The Manufacturing Skills for Industry Project was a 26-week employer led training initiative that blended work experience with relevant manufacturing and essential skills qualifications. It replicated industry practice with participants attending for 36 hours per week starting at 8:00am. The Programme was supported by the Department for the Economy and the European Social Fund. It ran from April 2015 to March 2018.

The Programme targeted long term unemployed or economically inactive participants and provided them with intensive support including pastoral care, skills support and personal mentoring. The vocational element was a blended learning mix of technical training, essential skills and industrial placement. Training was delivered at the purpose built facilities at the College's Millfield campus.

The programme assisted participants to overcome personal challenges, such as low self-esteem, substance dependence, lack of formal qualifications and numeracy and literacy difficulties by providing a personal development plan that included mentoring, Essential Skills, Employment skills and Job Search, CV and Interview Skills thereby enhancing their employability prospects.

A unique feature of this programme was the active engagement of locally based multinational companies. By designing the programme around their continuing recruitment needs, the programme was able to develop a pool of trained semi-skilled workers available to meet industry demand.

Local manufacturing employers such as Bombardier, Caterpillar, RYOBI, Montupet and Creative Composites were involved in the development of the programme and have demonstrated their full commitment by employing participants following completion of the programme.

Impact and Outcomes

Of those taking part, 144 participants achieved a Level 1 Performing Engineering Operations qualification and the targets for progression into employment or further education/ training were exceeded. For example, 56% of participants went into employment, predominantly in the manufacturing sector reflecting the programme model and 19% went onto further education and training at Level 2 and above.

The Project received an 'Outstanding' grade from the Education and Training Inspectorate in May 2017 and inspectors reported that *"A key strength of this project is the access that each participant has to the college's well-planned qualifications progression route, beyond the project, from level 1 up to and including level 3 qualifications."*

Source: Education & Training Inspectorate (May 2017) available on <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/european-social-fund-provision-belfast-metropolitan-college-manufacturing-skills>

The College has further developed this model of intervention on the new Skills for Industry Programme which will benefit long term unemployed and economically inactive participants. The new programme, once again supported by the Department for the Economy and the European Social Fund launched in late 2018 and will run until 2022.

How the Manufacturing Skills for Industry programme demonstrates Citizens' Curriculum Entry Pathways principles

| Principles | Capabilities | Links | Examples |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Taking account of the setting and local context | | ✓ | Long-term unemployed or economically inactive; barriers to work; active engagement of locally based companies |
| Learner involvement in co-design of learning | | ✓ | Skills support and personal mentoring; personal development plan; |
| Citizens' Curriculum Capabilities | | | |
| | Literacy/English | ✓ | Essential Skills part of the personal development plan – with qualifications offered |
| | Numeracy/Maths | ✓ | Essential Skills part of the personal development plan – with qualifications offered |
| | Language (ESOL) | | Not reported in the case study |
| | Digital Capability | | Not reported in the case study |
| | Health Capability | ✓ | Personal development plan supported participants to overcome personal challenges such as substance dependence |
| | Financial Capability | | Not reported in case study |
| | Civic Capability | ✓ | Blended work experience with relevant employment and essential skills qualifications |

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| Links to vocational | | ✓ | Employer led training; replicated industry practice; partnership with and active engagement of locally based multinational companies; work experience with relevant manufacturing qualifications; job coaching and training. |
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Critical Success Factors:

- Learner involvement in determining the development plan to meet their needs
- Programmes to help clients improve their employment situation
- Intensive support to improve employability prospects, gain qualifications or progress to further learning and training
- Working in partnership with the active engagement of locally based multinational companies
- Supported by the Department for the Economy with funding from the ESF